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ABSTRACT

This report provides an informed "snapshot," based on recent literature, of barriers to vocational education and training (VET) for target groups and an annotated bibliography of recent reports. Part A is a "solutions-oriented" overview of most VET-related equity research and reports since 1990. It discusses Australian National Training Authority access and equity principles and key equity target groups and defines terms. Part A then presents a brief assessment of barriers to access, participation, and outcomes for five target groups: women; Aboriginal and Torres Strait people; people with a disability; people from a non-English speaking background; and residents in rural and remote communities. Each analysis includes the following: an introduction (snapshot of the group's situation, definition of the group, demographics); barriers limiting access and participation and outcomes; and strategies and policies for improvement of access and participation and outcomes. Key findings, common barriers, and strategies and policies precede a list of 76 references. Part B consists of summaries of selected literature and reports on equity. Summaries are categorized by the five target groups. A general equity category includes reports that cover equity issues more broadly. Each summary has these components: title, publication details, synopsis, information on whether the report has an implementation/program or research/policy focus, key concerns, and key findings/recommendations. (YLB)

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ED 420 781

STOCKTAKE OF EQUITY REPORTS AND LITERATURE IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

**AUSTRALIAN
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STOCKTAKE OF EQUITY REPORTS AND LITERATURE IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

AUSTRALIAN
NATIONAL TRAINING
AUTHORITY

Australian National Training Authority
June 1997

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OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

There have been many research projects and reports on access and equity in relation to vocational education and training in Australia. While many are important and interesting no one can access or read them all.

This Stocktake Report, published by the Australian National Training Authority, is in response to a perceived need for:

- an annotated bibliography of recent reports, and
- an informed 'snapshot', based upon a close reading of recent literature, of what it is that prevents individuals and groups being fully included in VET, and from benefiting optimally in terms of experience and outcomes.

The Report can be used by:

- equity managers and practitioners across Australia
- teachers, trainers, clients, advocates and activists in the equity area generally and those with particular interests in VET
- researchers and policy makers in the equity and VET areas.

It is hoped that the report will aid in the development of policy and practice to increase equitable training outcomes for all Australians. The Report is divided into two related but quite distinct parts.

Part A: Report of Equity Literature: Barriers, Strategies and Policies.

Part A has been prepared for ANTA by Barry Golding, Veronica Volkoff and Fran Ferrier of the Centre for the Study of Higher Education, University of Melbourne.

The Part A Report aims to:

- for key equity target groups, discuss the definitions that appear in the literature and are applied in practice. This includes a brief discussion of the problems of identifying and classifying disadvantage and dealing with it
- note the barriers to access, participation and outcomes identified in the literature for each target group and across groups
- from the literature, note the strategies that have been employed to reduce these barriers by groups and across groups
- draw out some recommendations for future policies and strategies.

Part A is designed as a 'solutions oriented' overview of most VET-related equity research and reports since 1990. It can be used as an introduction to precede the extensive summaries in Part B. It also serves as a brief stand alone assessment of the barriers to access, participation and outcomes experienced by five target groups and VET participants overall, as well as detailing some policies and strategies to overcome those barriers. In addition, it can be used as a concise summary of the access and equity situation for each of the five target groups.

Part B: Stocktake of Reports 1990 - 1995, Selected Summaries

Part B has been prepared for ANTA by Joyce Marshall and Sue McGrath. The Part B Report comprises a stocktake of literature and reports on equity published between 1990 and 1995. The stocktake takes the form of report summaries, including, where applicable, details of recommendations contained in the reports.

The Part B report contains categories representing individual client groups, namely: women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people with disabilities, people from non-English speaking backgrounds and people from rural and remote areas. A general equity category includes reports which cover equity issues more broadly. Reports on women in a particular disadvantaged group, such as non-English speaking background, appear in the collection of the broader group rather than in the section on women.

During the preliminary stocktake process, each category was divided into primary publications and secondary publications. The selected summaries were generally drawn from primary publications. There was difficulty in obtaining many of the publications which is of concern to those seeking access to original sources.

PART A:

Report of Equity Literature: Barriers Strategies and Policies

THE METHOD

This Part A report is derived from a critical analysis of material in previous stocktakes, selected summaries and subsequent VET reports, research and data. It aims to assemble and synthesise information sufficient to provide a concise focus for future program, policy and research advice on access and equity in VET in Australia.

Preparation of the report was undertaken for ANTA during April 1997 by Barry Golding and Veronica Volkoff from the Centre for the Study of Higher Education, University of Melbourne, assisted by Fran Ferrier from the Centre for the Economics of Education and Training at Monash University. It is necessarily limited in its completeness by the short time frame in which it was undertaken.

All reports specifically referred to in the Part A report are cited and referred at the end of Part A.

The part two stocktakes and summaries of VET access and equity literature to 1995. The subsequent literature as well as that available outside of VET are extensive. Some clearly have the capacity to inform analyses and have thus been included in the preparation of this report. Also, some parallel barriers, strategies and options developed outside of VET have been incorporated into the discussion on VET policy.

The literature examined has been developed over a seven year period of considerable change in policy, clients, sectors, education and training agendas and labour market contexts. The barriers prevalent in 1991 may be more or less limiting in 1997. It is not possible to assume that all strategies which worked well for particular client groups, locations, providers or situations will be effective in the future. Conversely a failure in one context does not justify discarding a strategy altogether when it may work in a different circumstance.

ANTA has anticipated that new disadvantaged groups may emerge. A flexible VET system needs an approach to equity which anticipates and can respond to such future changes.

Access and Equity Principles

ANTA (1996a, 5) adopted five principles to underpin the policy framework and strategies to achieve access and equity.

1. Individuals, along with industry and enterprises, are clients of vocational education and training.
2. The training environment for individuals can be improved within the existing features of the national VET framework (ie competency standards, curriculum, assessment, delivery and staff development).
3. The link between training and employment outcomes for individuals can be improved by industry and enterprises.
4. Training outcomes for individuals can be improved by shifting the balance at the national level from specific access and equity programs offered by training providers to supporting individuals from under-represented groups in training and employment.
5. Planning and funding to improve access and equity in VET should be on the basis of real and credible outcomes which are measurable and on which progress is reported regularly.

Some comments on these principles are relevant when attempting to interpret previous equity related research and reports. The numbering below corresponds to the principles above.

1. Most previous VET research uses the concept of the individual as the client rather than the industry or enterprise. Communities can also be considered to be clients.
2. The VET framework to 1995 in which most of the literature was generated has changed and is changing. In particular, there is
    - a weakening of the nexus between competency standards, curriculum and assessment
    - an increasing emphasis on the development of a competitive market for the provision of VET
    - a changing view of equity that flows from the adoption of a 'mainstreaming' approach within a 'user choice' framework.

3. Training and employment outcomes for individuals are not the only outcomes desired by clients. Not all outcomes can be detected by simple, quantitative, short term indicators used in isolation. Further, as Long, McKenzie and urman (1996, 41) observed, 'If labour market outcomes of educational achievement are the object of interest, there must inevitably be a delay between the education and the outcome'.

4. Much of the literature examined evaluates and investigates targeted, 'equity program' approaches. The outcomes of mainstreaming approaches have generally not been addressed.

THE GROUPS

The groups included in the summaries

- Women
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- People with a disability
- Residents of rural and remote communities
- People from non-English speaking backgrounds

It is important in an analysis of this nature to be clear at the outset about the definitions of the five groups.

Definitions are important in measuring access, participation and outcomes critical in comparing research, reports and data and essential in approaches to access and equity which involve evaluation of policy targets, benchmarking or quality assurance indicators.

Women and *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander* clients are self-designated. That is, individuals simply declare their membership of these groups.

Most other target group definitions involve restrictions and variables in addition to self-disclosure and are therefore more problematic to measure, report and compare. Discussion of the other target group definitions (*Disability, Rural and Remote and Non-English Speaking Background*) are provided at the start of each section.

Other groups?

The five specific groups considered in this report are the ANTA designated equity target groups. These groups combined apply to approximately two thirds of all VET clients.

However, the groups identified here should not be seen as exhaustive. There is a need to monitor the performance of these five groups as well as other, emerging groups in the light of new information. As noted by NBEET (1994a, xi) 'disadvantage can amount to discrimination through neglect'.

Other groups not included in this report (such as people who are long term unemployed or in corrections facilities) can be identified as experiencing disadvantages in relation to access, participation and outcomes in VET. Individuals presumably experience compounding disadvantage if they are members of more than one of the groups considered, or are members of groups outside of the analysis.

Overlapping groups: an explanation

Analysis of overlapping membership of the different target groups is largely absent in the VET literature. However, overlapping membership is emerging as an important issue in the higher education access and equity literature (NBEET 1994a, 63).

Categorisation and comparisons of a single equity target group in VET with the balance of the VET population is relatively simple. Making extrapolations to those not in VET or to sub-sectors of VET for which data is lacking is much more difficult.

Analyses of disadvantage can sometimes be ambiguous. Some groups have what appears to be good access but experience poor outcomes. The reverse is true for other groups. Elkins (1994) suggested that there may be as much variability between learners within a similar 'category' of difference as there is between groups.

One of the reasons for this is that individuals in each target group often belong to one or more of the other target groups; that is, they have overlapping membership. A significant proportion of those encountering barriers to participation in VET are members of other groups not considered in this report (eg long term unemployed, people with limited previous education and training). Disadvantage will be compounded where people belong to more than one target group.

Further, access and equity problems demonstrated in the literature scanned for particular groups (eg Aboriginal groups) might derive from disproportionate membership in other groups (eg Rural and Remote) or from membership of groups beyond those currently considered (eg Long term unemployed, Low skills, In custody).

Moreover, as Golding and Volkoff (1997) have recently shown, different VET provider types are likely to have varying proportions of clients who belong to more than one target group.

There is little reference to provider type in this report because much of the available literature has focussed on provision in TAFE. However, there is a tendency in the available literature to extrapolate from TAFE to VET. Some strategies and policies identified in TAFE will not necessarily transfer to the diverse range of other VET provider types (these are outlined in the next section). Some barriers may become more critical to equity outside of TAFE, while other barriers operate in very different ways in particular locations.

This report makes a contribution to the ongoing effort to address access and equity in VET. Its limitation to five groups prevents full consideration of the effects of multiple disadvantage, particularly where disadvantage is experienced as a result of factors outside the boundaries of these groups.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Equity related terms

The terms 'access' and 'equity' are often used interchangeably in the literature without clear definition, as are the terms 'participation', 'attainment', 'success', 'retention' and 'outcomes'. Each term is defined and measured in different ways to give a quite different result. Definitions of these terms are essential if planning and funding continue to move towards measurable outcomes as intended by ANTA (1996a, Principle 5, p5).

There is an often mistaken assumption that each 'equity target group' experiences disadvantage in relation to all of the above criteria. However, some groups (such as Aboriginal groups) have relatively good access but tend to achieve poor outcomes at low program levels. Other groups achieve only limited access but relatively good outcomes (eg some disability sub-groups). Others, such as women, have high attainment but poor outcomes.

One of the conclusions that can be drawn from our analysis is that there is a need to adopt a common set of definitions and performance indicators for designated groups. Indicators which work across sectors would be preferable because they would allow comparisons and facilitate the measurement of the effectiveness of pathways. Those indicators developed in higher education (NBEET 1994a, Appendix 5) might be used as a starting point.

Equity

Equity is often confused with participation, although the two are not identical. It is much more difficult to measure equity or fairness than it is to measure participation. Equity can be viewed as a long term goal, with improving access and participation as steps towards its achievement.

Notions of equity in education have traditionally been based on social justice ideals: the right of all people to share equally in the benefits of society. More recently, though, a different conception of equity has appeared in the educational literature. In this recent interpretation, equity is conceived as necessary for the development of human potential, which in turn is necessary for the achievement of economic success (Ferrier 1995).

Access

Access to VET by group is most simply defined, quantitatively, as the proportion of total VET commencers in the group. Defined qualitatively, it covers the process associated with getting started in VET.

Participation

The term participation is used both quantitatively and qualitatively. Participation measures all students in a particular group expressed as a percentage of the total population within the same age group. This measure smooths out recent, and sometimes rapid, changes in enrolment patterns and takes account of populations (such as Aboriginal populations) which are demographically skewed.

The other use of the term participation is qualitative and refers to the actions, perceptions and experiences of people during their education and training. In this report, participation is a term covering a range of issues associated with persisting long enough to successfully complete VET programs. While the concept of access is different from the concept of participation, it can sometimes be useful to use participation rates as one measure of access.

Outcomes and Outputs

Equity outcomes relate to the question, 'Does VET benefit individual client groups?'

Outcomes can be measured qualitatively or quantitatively. Quantitative measures are used to indicate employment outcomes (usually measured within six months of completion). Qualitative measures are used to indicate the actions, perceptions and experiences, complete or incomplete, of students or their employers and may be measured through client and employer satisfaction surveys.

Outcomes are different from outputs. Whereas outcomes focus more broadly on the resultant effects of participation in VET, outputs focus on program outputs (module or course completion, success or retention). Outputs can be considered in relation to the question, 'How many of the people who enrol actually complete the unit of study, or module?'

Disadvantage

Disadvantage is a relative concept. A group disadvantaged in one dimension is not necessarily disadvantaged in another. For every disadvantaged group, there is, by definition, an advantaged group. For every group with limited access to VET there is another group or set of groups out-accessing it. Disadvantage in VET can be due to factors associated with group membership and/or associated with displacement by other groups.

VET

Vocational Education and Training (VET) is difficult to define. Definitions vary in the literature. While TAFE makes up approximately half of the VET training market it is the subject of almost all of the research literature, data, and reports. Nevertheless VET is not TAFE and TAFE data and research on access and equity do not necessarily transfer to the diverse range of non-TAFE, VET provider types.

As used in *The National Women's Vocational Education and Training Strategy* (ANTA 1996c), VET refers to 'education and training that leads to a vocational and work outcome . . . delivered in a range of settings including the workplace'. Although not stated in this definition, it conventionally excludes university and school settings, although some school and university programs clearly meet the definitional criteria.

Provider types

VET settings are also difficult to properly define. Anderson (1994) concluded that there is no simple division between private and public training providers. There is a diverse range of providers, programs and client groups inside and outside of TAFE. The literature often makes distinctions between VET provider types that are poorly defined. These definitions become important when comparing outcomes of groups by sector.

TAFE is the main public provider, delivering 85 per cent of Australian training, through 84 institutes (ANTA 1996f, 3). The remaining 15 per cent of training is delivered by 2,500 registered private providers and an unknown number of unregistered ones. These private training providers can be grouped in four main categories (ANTA 1996f, 37-38).

- *commercial training providers*

  which deliver fee for service training, either as individual consultants or as training colleges (eg secretarial and business colleges, computer training centres and training consultants)

- *industry based training providers*

  which deliver training to a range of firms across and industry (eg skills training centres, industry associations and group training companies)

- *enterprise based training providers*

  which deliver company specific training to employees within the firm and sometimes to other organisations on a fee for service basis

- *community based*

  which usually provide government funded training but also deliver training on a fee for service basis to individual students and firms (eg community education and Skillshare centres).

STRUCTURE OF THE ANALYSIS

Education and training are complicated processes and improvements in equity will require much more than improvements in access. Throughout the report, each section is subdivided into three main phases.

Access	which covers the process associated with getting started in VET
Participation	which covers issues associated with persisting long enough to successfully complete VET programs
Outcomes	which covers issues of involvement in the program beyond VET completion

It is important to note that though particular barriers or strategies may not be identified in the report for particular groups, this does not mean that they do not act or apply. In some cases, barriers which may have been expected for particular target groups, have simply not been the subject of formal study in the literature examined.

WOMEN

Introduction

A snapshot of the situation for women in VET
(from ANTA 1996b, page numbers and year for which data apply are indicated)

Overall, low levels of participation within VET, at lower skill levels, with more successful completions but poorer graduate outcomes in terms of employment, course relevance and earnings.

How are women defined?

Gender is routinely recorded at enrolment from information supplied by commencers in VET.

Women

- make up half of the population, 43 per cent of labour force but 75 per cent of part-time employees (12, 1995)
- have much lower labour force participation rate (54%) compared to males (74%) (12, 1995)
- are generally concentrated in service industries (12, 1995)
- have average weekly income two thirds of male income; full-time female employees average 79 per cent of equivalent male wage (14, 1995)
- are more likely to have no post school qualifications (62 per cent for females compared to 52 per cent for males) (14, 1995)
- as a group, participate in VET at the lower skill levels (26, 1995)
- in 15-19 year age range, participate in TAFE at half the rate of males (16, 1995)
- have increased in *number*, in TAFE, by 10 per cent (1989 to 94) but their participation has declined from 47.1 to 45.8 per cent of all TAFE enrolments (17, 1995)
- participate with significant rates of variation across different fields of study (19-20, 1995)
- have significantly higher success rates in modules than male students but significantly worse rates in discipline groups where they are under-represented (21-22, 1994)
- TAFE graduates were employed (after six months), at the rate of 67 per cent compared with 80 per cent of male graduates (24, 1995) TAFE graduates, when initially employed, are much more likely to be employed in fields 'not at all relevant' to their study (25, 1995)
- make up only 12 per cent of all apprenticeships (18, 1994).

Barriers

. . . limiting access

- **attitudinal factors**

When women start thinking about participation in VET and their vocational options, their choices are strongly influenced by societal, industry, school and family attitudes. Limiting images of women's roles in the media, lack of exposure to trade subjects at school or a broad range of work experience together with inadequate information about opportunities for training and employment reinforce these attitudes (DEET 1991b). Employer and employee attitudes can limit both expectations and opportunities of those already in the workforce, who require additional education and training to respond to changing demands for skills (NSW MEYA undated).

- **entry points and pathways**

Inflexible course selection procedures, lack of appropriate entry points and articulated pathways into accredited courses pose barriers for women applicants. While RPL processes may enhance access through reducing study time, women often undersell and undervalue their skills and need support in the RPL process. Implementation practices which require enrolment in a course prior to applying for RPL may also pose a barrier for women applicants (Davis 1992, DEET 1991b). There is a lack of appropriate course counselling, which women need to make informed choices and to prepare for their study (Barnett and Wilson 1995).

- **fees and charges**

At a time when TAFE fees, costs and charges are escalating, for many women, access to lump sums for payment of up-front fees may be problematic. Women are much less likely than men to receive employer financial support. In some cases command of the family or household resources may be an access issue. It is also suggested by the Women's Bureau (1993) that women may have a higher aversion to risk than men. Much of the privately provided training appears to be pitched at female clients, the fees, costs and charges levied by these providers are considerable, in some cases several times those of TAFE. In the face of ongoing excess demand for training places, women may be forced to take up places in the expensive, commercial providers. Some women may fear that there may be further escalations of fees, costs or charges during the course of their studies (Women's Bureau DEET 1993, Barnett and Wilson 1995, Barnett, Foyster and Werner 1996).

- **employment factors**

  There is a gap between the skills levels of employed women and those of men. Women's participation in occupations and industries is restricted to a narrow range of options (VEETAC 1993). While these gaps and restrictions exist, they pose barriers to women's access to training opportunities.

- **inadequate literacy and numeracy skills**

  Lack of literacy and numeracy skills pose substantial barriers to access to training for women whose skills in these areas are low. While problems associated with inadequate literacy and numeracy skills are more pronounced for women from non-English speaking backgrounds, they are not confined to this group (Davis 1992).

. . . limiting participation and outcomes

- **learning environment**

  Disadvantages within the learning environment include inappropriate learning materials, gender harassment, particularly in courses where women are in the minority, lack of appropriate counselling and support mechanisms and rigid timetabling (DEET 1991b).

- **income support**

  Women are more likely than men to be employed part-time and in smaller firms. They are less likely than men to receive employer support for workplace based or off-the-job training. Where support is offered, it is more likely to be in the form of leave without pay rather than fees or paid leave (Barnett, Foyster and Werner 1996).

- **family responsibilities**

  Women's participation tends to be more self-driven than men's. With less likelihood of employer support, their participation is influenced not only by their ability to balance study time with family-related responsibilities, but also by their family financial responsibilities (Barnett, Foyster and Werner 1996). These barriers apply even more strongly to women from non-English speaking backgrounds, who tend to carry the dual responsibilities of work and home (Stephens and Bertone, 1995).

Barnett, Foyster and Werner (1996) suggest that together with courses not meeting expectations, lack of child-care was a primary reason cited by women for not completing courses in TAFE. Willis and Kenway (1996, 8) stated that

> The lack of appropriate child-care is the single largest factor inhibiting women's opportunity to participate as fully as they wish in full or part-time work, limiting them to casual work, reducing their opportunities to work shifts and overtime and their access to training. (DEET 1991)

- **timetabling**

  Lack of flexibility in timetabling represents a major barrier for women wanting to participate in VET. This barrier relates directly to women's child care responsibilities (Barnett and Wilson 1995).

Strategies and Policies

. . . for improvement of access

- **encouraging and recruiting**

Conduct employment promotions which focus on the ways in which trade occupations cater to women's needs (Lyall and Hawkins 1993).

Implement systematic affirmative action (DEET 1991b).

Use information channels appropriate to women and ensure that potential women students are made aware of factors which encourage their participation (eg. child-care, access courses, flexible timetabling) (Barnett and Wilson, 1995).

Develop appropriate responses to the education and training needs of all women, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds (DEET 1991b).

Involve Industry Training Advisory Bodies (ITABs), group training companies, industry associations and unions in developing and distributing information to employers about the benefits of training and employing women (ANTA 1996a).

Ensure access for girls to trade subjects at school and opportunities to undertake supportive, non-traditional work experience (DEET 1991a, Lyall and Hawkins 1993).

Increase women's awareness of the trades through advertising programs in ways that appeal to women and include, in promotional materials, examples of women participating in the relevant occupations. Promotional activities should centre around female role models and showcase women's achievements. Tradeswomen on the Move projects, the work of Affirmative Action in Training (Victoria) and Trade-Based Pre-Employment, provide some best practice examples (VEET 1994, DEET 1991a, Lyall and Hawkins 1993).

Develop resources for careers educators to support women's entry into trades (Lyall and Hawkins 1993).

Conduct professional development activities and develop support resources relevant to the recruitment, selection and retention of women in structured, entry-level training (DEET 1991a).

Train employment advisers in relation to recruitment of women into non-traditional trades (DEET 1991a).

Actively encourage women to study in areas where they are under represented and match this training with appropriate support services and role models (DEET 1991b, Smith and Ewer 1995).

Education authorities should ensure that strategies are in place to encourage young women to participate in all new developments in school-based VET (DEET 1991a).

- **facilitating program entry**

Facilitate appropriate entry points and articulated pathways into accredited courses (VEET 1994, DEET 1991b).

Provide course counselling which is free of gender bias (DEET 1991b, Barnett and Wilson 1995).

Use RPL to formally acknowledge women's prior learning and provide due credit. This can significantly reduce the study time for women and therefore provide encouragement and improve access. However, to be effective, the RPL process requires a sensitive approach which is supportive, encouraging and interactive to enhance the ability of the participants to identify their skills (DEET 1991b, ANTA 1996a, Davis 1992).

Ensure RPL implementation is adequately resourced and supported by staff training and institutional policy, to take into consideration issues pertinent to women. Resources need to be available in plain English and major community languages to minimise language barriers to potential applicants, including NESB women. Networking of VET providers on a national basis for sharing of resources and documentation of best practice in implementation of RPL for women should be encouraged (Davis 1992).

Develop strategies involving direct approaches to industry, unions, employer bodies and Industry Training Advisory Bodies for active support in recruitment and training of female entry-level trainees (DEET 1991a).

Establish priority criteria for employment of females employees with Group Training companies (DEET 1991a).

Adopt timetabling features which enhance women's access such as

- interrupted study to facilitate completion in stages
- short revision and enrichment courses
- part-time study
- day-time study scheduled to fit into the school day (Barnett and Wilson, 1995).

- **creating a more conducive training market**

Establish targets for women's participation, particularly in non-traditional trades (DEET 1991a).

Support monitoring processes of the training market to ensure that women are not disadvantaged through the resource allocation process, fees imposition or by TAFEs response to changing training markets and technological innovation (DEET 1991b, Smith and Ewer 1995).

Extend successful, trade-based, pre-employment initiatives including preparatory courses (Barnett, 1993).

. . . for improvement of participation and outcomes

- **enhancing the learning environment**

Provide professional development for all training provider personnel to ensure that they have an understanding of the barriers which restrict women's participation and support gender inclusive teaching. Ensure equal proportions of women and men deliver professional development activities for teaching staff (DEET 1991b, VEET 1994, DEET 1991a).

Ensure gender equity in competency standards development, through equitable representation in the standards development process and use of appropriate methods of analysis and language. Identify all relevant competencies, not just the technical/task ones (NTB 1991, Smith and Ewer 1995). All those involved in conducting a competency analysis should be knowledgeable of and sensitive to the issues of gender bias (NTB 1991).

Monitor and evaluate curriculum development processes to ensure gender inclusive curriculum and integration of RPL (VEET 1994, Davis 1992, Smith and Ewer 1995).

Facilitate achievement of a 'critical mass' of female participants, particularly in non-traditional trades to enable peer support (VEET 1994).

Establish and promote mechanisms to prevent sex-based harassment in the learning environment and to effectively deal with grievances (VEET 1994).

Improve support services for women (DEET 1991b).

Include content in the curriculum on affirmative action and equal opportunity, particularly when addressing industrial relations issues (VEET 1994).

Provide additional support for female trainees entering occupations where there are still few female employees (VEET 1994).

- **recognising family responsibilities**

Use flexible timetabling and delivery models to accommodate the family care responsibilities which otherwise may restrict some women's participation (DEET 1991b).

Provide affordable, accessible and culturally appropriate child care (VEET 1994, ANTA 1996a).

- **developing appropriate policy**

Enhance the development of policy in relation to access, participation and outcomes for women through the equitable participation of women in VET sector decision making (VEET 1994, DEET 1991a, VEETAC 1993, DEET 1991b).

Introduce initiatives to motivate private providers to address access and equity issues. Without such intervention, an open training market can mean that participation in VET will become a privilege rather than a right (Barnett 1993).

Barnett also suggests that access and equity oriented incentives for both TAFE and non-TAFE providers are most likely to be effective if

- linked to accreditation and funding of courses
- training purchasers stipulate that training provisions must focus not only on courses, but also on the factors influencing accessibility to those courses
- Governments also provide support in the form of information and advice to providers to assist them in addressing access and equity issues.

- **conducting research**

Support longitudinal research to assess the long-term effect of RPL on women's career and training prospects (Davis 1992).

Establish processes to monitor and evaluate progress in improving women's participation in training (DEET 1991a).

- **establishing an equitable training market**

In the development of training plans and the negotiation of enterprise agreements, explicitly address how training has been designed to meet the needs of workers with family responsibilities (Smith and Ewer 1995). Consider how the training entitlements of casual and part-time workers can be advanced through enterprise bargaining, including through pro-rata entitlements.

Develop checklists of guidelines and possible strategies covering consultation and gender equity in industry training plans (Smith and Ewer 1995).

Support research to monitor enterprise bargaining and provide occupational profiles by gender. Support field work to widen such research beyond an analysis of the agreements in order to assess the actual implementation of change at the workplace (Smith and Ewer 1995). There has been little indication that the enterprise bargaining process will assist women unless there is a shift to a new equity-based concept of productivity and measures which provide safeguards to the extension of time flexibilities. This is necessary to prevent these from further entrenching discrimination at the workplace (Smith and Ewer 1995).

Address the different treatment of apprentices (mainly male) compared with trainees (mainly female) (Women's Bureau 1993).

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE

Introduction

A snapshot of the situation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in VET

(from ANTA 1996b, page numbers and year for which data apply are indicated)

Overall, reasonable access at low skill levels but poorer completion rates and labour market outcomes.

How are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people defined?

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status is routinely recorded at enrolment from information provided by commencers in VET. In effect, it involves self-definition. The term Indigenous is used interchangeably with 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander'. Apart from self-definition, Aboriginality is determined for administrative purposes by a tripartite definition involving self-identification, recognition within an Indigenous community and being a descendent of an Indigenous Australian person.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

- make up 1.7 per cent of the Australian population but 2.6 per cent of clients in TAFE and 0.8 per cent in higher education. Demand for VET is high relative to population share (ANTA 1996a), partly due to a skewed age distribution, significantly younger than the Australian population as a whole. (7, 1994)
- are over-represented in TAFE in terms of commencements in all States except Queensland, but TAFE participation and qualification levels acquired are predominantly at the lower skill levels and with significantly lower completion rates (6-7, 1994, NSW TAFE 1995)
- are under-represented in a range of vocational streams and fields of study, particularly at the higher skill levels (Teasdale and Teasdale 1996, 90)
- two thirds of all Indigenous students are enrolled in preparatory programs that are pre-requisites for other mainstream VET programs (Teasdale and Teasdale 1996, 90)
- are not evenly distributed geographically or by State. The largest population centres are in capital cities. Half of the Australian Indigenous population is in NSW and Queensland. Indigenous people make up 27 per cent of the NT population. (7, 1994)

- experience unemployment rates three times higher than non-Aboriginal people (ABS 1991 Census). Those TAFE graduates employed are much more likely to be in unskilled and semi skilled occupations. (9, 1995)
- are significantly under-represented in wholesale, retail, finance, property and business services industries (4, 1991)
- have a greater tendency to leave school early (NSW TAFE 1995, 36) and enter the labour market before education and training (McIntyre et al. 1996, 4)
- adult education for Aboriginal people, 'unlike "mainstream" education in Australia, cannot base itself on assumptions about previous schooling' (SEET 1997, p 51)
- have a lower level of educational attainment and lower levels of literacy (VETEC 1993)
- have poorer labour market outcomes and are much more likely to access VET for reasons of interest or personal development (10-11, 1994) or to work in community organisations or government services in health, education or welfare (McIntyre et al. 1996, 4).

Barriers

. . . *limiting access*

- **understanding cultural difference**

> ...the main 'difficulties' usually attributed to Aboriginal education by non-Aboriginal people are due to their lack of understanding of what "cultural difference" really means in education and training. (McIntyre et al. 1996, 8)

The notion of equitable access, participation and outcomes therefore requires consideration of Indigenous cultural attitudes to the terms themselves.

- **recognising cultural difference in defining access**

Teasdale and Teasdale (1996, 21) described a significant shift in government policy dealing with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues 'from equity to indigenous rights, reflecting both international trends and post-Mabo implications'.
National Review (1995a) identified three different ways of viewing access.

- View 1, a 'neutral view of access' involves getting individuals to take up available opportunities in the existing educational mainstream, on the assumption that these goals and outcomes are self-evidently desirable. This view is similar to the traditional, mainstream VET position reflected throughout much of the early literature.

- View 2, 'access as outreach', treats Indigenous people as 'a special group' on the basis of cultural difference. It aims to find special ways of allowing Indigenous students to access culturally aware and sensitive programs by expanding systems, geographically and culturally or bringing Indigenous people to programs in other locations. This view is reflected in much recent public provider policy.

- View 3, a 'community perspective' of access, incorporates demands by local Indigenous communities for equitable access to education, not only to that available to Australians generally. This view is reflected in most, recent Indigenous educational pedagogy.

- **provider responses**

McNamara and Valadian (1994) succinctly identify the key barrier to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples accessing the 'mainstream' as

> in part the result of educational institutions' inability to change their services and the need for Indigenous people to develop their own educational services. Each has is roots in historical experiences. (p63)

The key provider related issues identified by Crawley et al. (1996a, 5) include a lack of physical access to educational services, inadequate teacher and provider sensitivity and relevance to cultural differences in curricula, lack of teacher relations with students and their communities and language difficulties.

- **literacy and numeracy**

The key issues of self determination, ownership, culture and control, and efforts to improve access to higher level programs in VET are predicated on appropriate programs to improve Indigenous literacy and self management skills.

. . . limiting participation and outcomes

- **recognising cultural assumption in participation and outcome measures**

Indigenous equity also requires a recognition that a variety of participation and outcome measures may be considered to be appropriate.

> In addition to vocational aspirations, Aboriginal adults may wish to participate in education and training so as to be involved with their peers or to be seen as role models for the next generation or to help their children and grandchildren with their homework - reasons which do not equate with the conventional 'outcomes' ascribed to vocational training. (SEET 1997, 51-52)

National Review (1995a) identified three different ways of approaching participation from an indigenous perspective.

- View 1, 'participation in culturally sensitive education' is based on the assumption that 'special, culturally aware and culturally sensitive provision' is required for Indigenous people but can be delivered through conventional providers.

- View 2, 'Engagement in culturally appropriate education', goes a step further and uses alternative, Indigenous participation indicators which are socially and culturally defined.

- View 3 recognises the 'need for more sensitive, qualitative research', based on the premise that current quantitative participation and retention indicators are inadequate for characterising Indigenous education and training.

Overall, the key participation and outcomes barriers include

- **employment**

  There is a lack of employment opportunities in many Indigenous communities and employment discrimination outside of those communities. McNamara and Valadian (1994, 64) noted that 'Education and training must be useful before it can be accepted'. They also noted that there is little research on the role of training in assisting Indigenous long term unemployed and the never employed.

- **appropriateness**

  There is a lack of culturally sensitive or appropriate programs including programs which address issues associated with Indigenous literacy and numeracy and which lead to successful outcomes, however defined.

- **control**

  There is a lack of ownership or Indigenous control over all aspects of education and training.

Strategies and Policies

- **implementing Indigenous principles**

  National Review (1995a) identified some overall principles which should underpin future approaches to Indigenous education provision. These principles involve recognising

  - *self determination*: consultation is not sufficient: self determination, empowerment and control (of curriculum, delivery modes, outcomes, resources) is essential
  - *control*: over allocation, distribution and management of funds by Indigenous incorporated bodies
  - *diversity*: programs available with maximum Indigenous choice

- *subsidiarity*: shifting responsibility for and about indigenous VET as far down the administrative systems as possible
- *affiliation*: coordination as far up the administrative system as Indigenous communities wish
- *efficiency*: minimising administration and maximising money actually spent on services.

The two key policy issues in the literature from an Indigenous perspective are a need for

- empowerment and self determination of individuals in their communities
- Indigenous self management and control of all aspects of education and training at all levels (policy, planning, provision, funding, evaluation, research).

. . . *addressing barriers to access*

- **recognising Indigenous people**

The idea of student identity as an Indigenous person is often poorly understood by VET practitioners (McIntyre et al. 1996, 6).

- **ensuring culturally appropriate provision within institutions**

Establishing

- programs which are culturally inclusive and culturally appropriate (VETEC 1993)
- supportive learning environments, where feasible, based on Aboriginal Units/ support services/ cultural spaces/ enclave structures (Bradshaw 1996, 51, McIntyre et al. 1996, 5)
- opportunities for choice from mainstream programs (Finch 1992)
- opportunities to recognise prior Indigenous learning (Teasdale and Teasdale 1996, 92).

Designing content specifically for Indigenous people or containing a significant component of Indigenous Australian studies or perspectives (McIntyre et al. 1996, 5).

- **acknowledging diversity**

  Indigenous populations are very diverse geographically, and in remote areas are not homogeneous entities. This needs to be acknowledged in the program planning process (Coles 1993, 1, McNamara and Valadian 1994, 65). Consequently there is no 'ideal' mode or modes of delivery (McIntyre et al. 1996, 9).

- **developing a community context**

  Incorporate bilingual and Indigenous language programs where appropriate (National Review 1995a).

  Involve Indigenous communities in course delivery (National Review 1995a, McIntyre et al. 1996, 6).

  Check and negotiate with Aboriginal staff and communities for cultural appropriateness (McIntyre et al. 1996, 6).
  Recognise the critical importance of transport and the effects of homesickness for Indigenous people away from home.

  Incorporate and recruit locally trained, Indigenous staff, who are adequately resourced and supported (Buckskin, Highett and Davis 1994, McIntyre et al. 1996, 6).

. . . *addressing barriers to participation and outcomes*

- **incorporating Indigenous perspectives**

  Indigenous research, pedagogy and evaluation recognises the tension between 'equitable educational achievement' in mainstream terms as opposed to 'appropriate educational achievement' in Indigenous terms (Bradshaw 1996, 51).

  Focus should not be simply on quantitative participation and outcome data. With this in mind, it is necessary to

  - collect better quality information to monitor outcomes of participation in VET (National Review 1995a)
  - undertake research that incorporates principles of self-determination, Indigenous control, collaboration and community based inquiry (Buchanan and Egg 1996, 26).

- **acknowledging culture**

Acknowledging cultural differences, cultural influences and social obligations which impact on participation and retention (Bradshaw 1996, 51)
Recognise that VET is a cultural activity, make space for Indigenous identity and self-esteem in institutions (Buchanan and Egg 1996, 2), involve Indigenous people in decision making about their own education and ensure greater involvement in the delivery (Crawley et al. 1996a, 6).

Negotiate cross-cultural course design and delivery with the institution and community (Buchanan and Egg 1996, 15). Professional development strategies should include cross-cultural training for VET managers (Buchanan and Egg 1996, 25).

- **delivering**

Ensuring appropriate delivery in a form appropriate to Aboriginal adults, tailored to specific education needs including 'second chance' programs incorporating basic literacy and numeracy (National Review 1995a).

Where possible, all or most students in programs should be Indigenous Australians.

Staff should be Indigenous, or if not, be sensitive and aware of the needs of the Indigenous students (McIntyre et al. 1996, 5).

- **programming for relevance**

Ensure program options incorporate technical competencies to lead to increased employment, empowerment and control over technical functions in smaller, remote communities (Walker and Seeman 1994).

Mode of delivery should recognise the needs of Indigenous students (McIntyre et al. 1996, 6), and produce learning environments where there is a strong sense of family, collaborative learning styles, high level of individual attention and few dangers of 'shame' situations (Commonwealth 1995, 43).

Where possible, literacy and numeracy should be built into vocational courses, not just 'preparatory' and general ones (Buchanan and Egg 1996, 21), taking account of the range of English language and literacy learning goals of Indigenous learners, the use of English language as part of entry criteria, and the extent to which Aboriginal languages are acknowledged as part of the teaching and learning process (McIntyre et al. 1996, 7).

Assessments should be negotiable and time schedules flexible to account for family priorities (McIntyre et al. 1996, 6).

- **providing support structures**

  Recognise that a range of support is necessary, particularly tutoring, counselling, family and community support (Buchanan and Egg 1996, 21), both in enclaves and in mainstream programs (Bradshaw 1996, 51-52).

  Develop clear role definitions of Indigenous support staff and their links and communication with student services (Bradshaw 1996, 52).

PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

Introduction

A snapshot of the situation for people with a disability in VET
(from ANTA 1996b, page numbers and year for which data apply are indicated)

Overall, low levels of VET participation at low skill levels, with much poorer labour market outcomes, particularly for those with a disability which involves a handicap.

How is disability defined?

Most definitions of disability are self-defined. However, since the question actually asked about disability varies greatly, so too does the proportion of clients identifying as being a person with a disability. In addition some individuals with a disability do not recognise it as such. Others may choose not to disclose because of a stigma associated with their disability type. Consequently, reported levels are likely to be under estimations.

Formal definitions of disability in the literature are multi-faceted and complex, but are largely undefined in much of the VET literature. For this reason, direct comparisons of VET research and data are problematic across sectors and States. As Morris (1993, 16) point out in relation to learning disabilities, shortcomings in definitions 'affect not only the size and precision of estimates of prevalence (of the disability) but also affect the implications that can be drawn from them'.

Disabilities are broadly categorised into sensory, hearing, visual and disabilities that are either physical, health related, learning or psychiatric. Most commonly accepted definitions of disability are based on medical descriptors which are not always appropriate in a learning context (NTCC 1993, 10). Most legislative definitions of disability include aspects of the *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. In higher education it involves two conditions of self-definition; that it '... may affect your studies' *and* you '... would like to receive advice on support ...which may assist you'.

OTFE (1993b, 8) included, as well as self-definition, identification 'by teachers or student counsellors as having an impairment resulting in loss or reduction of capacity, and ... likely to encounter difficulty in gaining access to and participating effectively...' in an accredited program.

The concept of 'reasonable adjustment' is included in anti-discrimination legislation (O'Connor 1993). Adjustment may be needed in one or more areas of functioning: mobility, manual skills, health, vision, written language, hearing, spoken language, learning, interpersonal skills or work orientation (O'Connor 1993, 10). In VET, the concept covers institution design, including the provision of equipment, physical access, curriculum design, delivery and assessment (NTCC 1993, 51).

Elkins (1994, 39) suggested three disability groups based not on 'diagnostic categories' but on types of education needs. One type is related to physical disability leading to access problems, including sensory disabilities, which cause problems with curriculum access. A second type relates to an intellectual impairment, and a third applies to 'those whose educational history is marked by failure'. In the third type, Elkins argues for individual consideration and support (p 40).

The effort, logistics and cost of providing support services for students with disabilities varies dramatically with disability type (Jones 1994, viii). Considering all those with a disability within one target category loses sight of these individual differences which become critical at a programming and funding level.

People with a disability

- make up 18 per cent of the population (defined by ABS (1993) as the 'presence of one or more limitations, restrictions or impairments (for six months or more)' (54, 1993)
- make up 11 per cent of the labour force and 15 per cent of the working age population (NTCC 1994, 10 and 53, ABS 1993a)
- often have a handicap ('limitation to perform certain tasks associated with daily living'); 79 per cent survey have a self-reported handicap (54, 1993)
- are more likely to be older than other students (54, 1993)
- usually report one disability: 96 per cent of VET participants with a disability reported one disability (in descending order of frequency: physical, visual, other intellectual, hearing, chronic illness) (59, 1994)
- have a lower participation in the labour force (62, 1993) and significantly higher unemployment, particularly those with a handicap (54-55, 1993), but higher level of educational attainment than for employed people without a disability
- have lower levels of participation in post-compulsory education (NTCC 1993, 10)
- make up 4.3 per cent of VET (mostly TAFE) clients (ACVETS 1994). This figure is unable to be directly compared with ABS data, since they were collected using a different technique. (57, 1994)
- are over-represented in courses where there is not a labour market demand and in declining industry areas (NTCC 1993, 10)
- have a higher attrition rate than other students (NTCC 1993, 34)
- are more often enrolled in educational preparation, basic education and basic employment skills courses than other students (NTCC 1993, 10, based on 1991 TAFE data)
- make up 5.9 per cent of TAFE graduates (54, 1997)
- who are TAFE graduates, as a group have lower skill levels (59, 1994)
- take longer to complete VET modules (ACVETS 1994)
- if TAFE graduates, have significantly poorer labour market outcomes (61, 1995).

Barriers

Dundas (1994) identified four main barriers to access for people with a disability: physical, attitudinal, financial and learning.

. . . limiting access

VETEC (1993) provided a useful, comprehensive summary of barriers to access for people with a disability. They are

- **lack of mobility** and/or ability to use public transport
- **limited physical access** to VET premises
- **limiting attitudes and misconceptions** in VET and in the community
- **limited alternative learning resources**
- **limited appropriate mainstream support**
- **lack of post-school options.**

. . . *limiting participation and outcomes*

VETEC (1993) also provided a summary of barriers relevant to participation and outcomes for people with a disability. They include

- **responsibilities**

  There is a lack of clarity and poor role clarification in relation to responsibility for provision, special equipment, program customisation and support services.

- **links**

  Poor links between schools and VET and between VET and work particularly disadvantage people with a disability.

- **lack of individual support**

  Appropriate work experience, on the job training and adjustment of programs, schedules and competencies are critical factors in both participation and outcomes.

The literature also stresses the following barriers.
There are difficulties related to multi skilling and achieving generic competencies for people with an intellectual disability (who comprise the largest disability group at school leaving age) (Reynolds and Barnett 1993).

Competency based selection and employment factors also negatively affect people with a disability (Reynolds and Barnett 1993).

People with learning disabilities have more difficulties with learning outcomes which involve thinking and understanding (Morris 1993, 3).

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Strategies and Policies

. . . addressing barriers to access

- **developing policies and strategies**

  Develop VET provider policies on provision of programs and formalised strategies to ensure requirements of students with a disability are met (Meadows and Tronc 1990).

- **providing information**

  Provide targeted, clear and accessible information to present and potential students with a disability on services and options in VET (Lawless 1991).

- **improving physical access**

  Address the needs for transport and physical access for students with mobility impairment (Lawless 1991).

  Provide access to mainstream provision supported by appropriate special services (NBEET 1994b, 15).

- **consulting**

  Involve and liaise with disability clients and groups who represent them at all stages of planning, development and delivery.

- **accommodating**

  Incorporate flexibility into delivery methods and course materials, use appropriate technologies and provide modified assessment methods (Commonwealth Disability Strategy 1994), which are designed in conjunction with the person with the disability or their advocate (Reynolds and Barnett 1993).

  Provide for reduced student /instructor ratios and additional costs associated with learning support, such as note takers, interpreters and individual tutors (NTCC 1993, 30).

- **researching and disseminating**

  Establish research centres which focus on development and dissemination of open learning and flexible delivery methods appropriate for particular disability groups (Dundas 1994).

  Promote materials which challenge stereotypes of gender and disability (NTCC 1993, 32).

Provide best practice integration examples for particular disability sub-groups (eg Vision impaired, Intellectually disabled, Acquired brain injury) (Crawley et al. 1996b).

. . . addressing barriers to participation and outcomes

- **presenting information**

Present information in different ways, use modified assessment and implement the 'principle of reasonable adjustment' (O'Connor 1993) to effectively monitor competencies for people with a disability (Commonwealth Disability Strategy 1994, 34).

- **training and development**

Provide professional development for teaching staff aimed at raising awareness and understanding of the special needs of people with disabilities (Dundas 1994, Meadows and Tronc 1990, Lawless 1991).

- **implementing efficiencies**

Avoid duplication of resources and effort by liaison, cooperation and determination of roles and responsibilities (VETEC 1993, Meadows and Tronc 1990). Link subsidies and financial incentives to a number of people rather than one individual (VETEC 1993).

- **modifying programs**

Consider physical and support requirements of people with a disability when planning, implementing and evaluating programs and provider facilities (Lawless 1991).

Incorporate the principle of reasonable adjustment into all nationally developed materials (NSW TAFE undated b, O'Connor 1993).

Link competencies, slow workers' permits and other sub award wage assessments to a national competency standards scheme for people with extensive handicaps for employment (Reynolds and Barnett 1993).

Establish flexibility in job assessment, in training settings and in RPL (Reynolds and Barnett 1993).

Develop more finely grained accreditation between standards levels and the development of training activities and competency standards at a pre-Level 1 standard (Reynolds and Barnett 1993).

Implement collaborative processes to develop reasonable adjustment mechanisms to counter in-built bias against disabilities in competency standards (NTCC 1993, 27).

- **changing attitudes**

  Alter employer, trainer and wider community attitudes to people with a disability (VETEC 1993).

- **flexible delivery**

  Use self-paced delivery, appropriate resources and media (VETEC 1993).

  Identify resource requirements, availability of flexible delivery and assessment, program design and materials to suit individual needs of people with disabilities (NTCC 1993, 18).

- **collecting data**

  Improve data collection in relation to students with a disability in mainstream programs (Meadows and Tronc 1990). Ensure it is in a manner which is client sensitive (Lawless 1991).

  Improve the capacity of data collection systems to record progress from access courses, use of supports and impact on participation and course completion (NTCC 1993, 27).

- **improving assistance**

  Adopt a long term view of assistance (VETEC 1993), including income support (Lawless 1991).

  Enhance opportunities in small business either for employees or owner managers (NBEET 1994b).

  Establish employment placement and support services, vocational counsellors and career information in alternative media formats (NTCC 1993, 35 and 49).

- **providing appropriate resources**

  People with severe disabilities have difficulty with major life activities and need higher levels of support to achieve their learning outcomes. Appropriate resourcing for the support of people with special needs must be provided (Morris 1993, 3-4).

PEOPLE FROM A NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING BACKGROUND

Introduction

A snapshot of the situation for non-English speakers in VET
(from ANTA 1996b, page numbers and year for which data apply are indicated)

Overall, the literature reports wide variation in participation and attainment. The main source of disadvantage is difficulty with English language skills. NESB women experience the highest level of disadvantage.

How is non-English speaking background defined?

Non-English speaking background (NESB) clients in VET have been defined in several ways. All include in the self-definition, 'speaking a language other than English at home'. Some definitions exclude Australian born people who arrived in Australia more than 10 years ago.

OTFE (1993b, 8) recognised NESB 'either by place of birth, by language spoken at home or level of proficiency of English which has created a disadvantage to ... gaining access to and participation in an accredited vocational program'. It is clear that this definition depends very much on other definitions embodied within it.

ANTA defines this group as 'people born in a country which is not a main English speaking country'. Most definitions exclude Australian Indigenous language speakers even though language proficiency is clearly an important determinant of success, however defined. Direct comparisons are only meaningful if similar definitions are employed.

NSW TAFE (1995) noted 'a lack of a nationally uniform definition of NESB ... used by various agencies responsible for VET', and some uncertainty as to whether ethnicity data on participation in apprenticeships and traineeships will be collected on a basis consistent with the Australian VET Management Information System Standard (AVETMISS). By contrast, they pointed out that higher education had been able to monitor participation levels of even second generation NESB migrants since 1984 (p 58).

People from a non-English speaking background

- broadly defined, comprise 21 per cent of the Australian population. 13 per cent were born in a non-English speaking country (first generation). Another 9 per cent were born in Australia but with one or both parents born in a non-English speaking country (second generation) (43, 1991).
- show variations in education and training attainment patterns which depend on birthplace (47, 1991). These variations are lost within a single NESB categorisation.
- are on average markedly older than English speaking people. Older NESB people are mainly from Europe. More recently arrived NESB people are from Asia, are younger and less likely to be fluent English speakers (44, 1991).
- have a significantly higher English proficiency if younger and male (45, 1991)
- if without an English proficiency, have reduced job prospects (46, 1995)
- receive less support for training from their employers (53, 1995)
- if employed, are concentrated in labourer, tradesperson and machine operator occupations (47, 1991)
- have participation rates in TAFE above population representation but skewed by young people born in a non-English speaking country (48, 1994)
- overall, have increased unemployment rates (VETEC 1993). Fluency in English has a marked impact on how long a person remains unemployed (46, 1996).
- have lower levels of post school qualifications and are over represented at lower skill level preparatory programs in VET (47-48, 1991)
- have participation rates which are very dependent on birthplace and whether qualifications are recognised in Australia (47-48, 1991 and 1993)
- comprise 18 per cent of TAFE participants compared with 13.3 per cent of population and 16 per cent of working age population (48, 1994)
- make up 16 per cent of TAFE graduates (where NESB is defined as 'spoke another language at home': 51, 1995).
- make up a high proportion of those with previous post-school experience overseas (NSW TAFE 1995, 38)
- NESB women, in particular, receive less training of all kinds than any other group, including NESB men. Most of this is unstructured, on-the-job training leading to no formal accreditation within the training system. Often pre-vocational, it is usually in language and literacy (Bertone 1995, 3).
- Better educated NESB people have much higher probabilities of receiving training, unless they completed their education overseas, in which case they are no more likely than people without post-school qualifications to have participated in training (NSW TAFE 1995, 28).
- 'a significant number of NESB migrants are illiterate in their own language which makes it particularly difficult for them to deal with literacy and other classes in English' (SEET 1997, 59).

Barriers

. . . limiting access

- **difficulties with English language skills**

The major reason for lower participation of NESB women in training is difficulty with English language skills (Stephens and Bertone 1995). These may be real difficulties or perceived ones. Bertone (1995, 67) reported a widespread perception held by NESB women that training imposed English literacy demands which they would be unable to meet (Bertone 1995, Vanden Heuvel and Wooden 1995).

There is a tendency in some industries to 'erect unnecessary barriers to entry level training based on communication competencies' (Bertone 1995, 12). Mawer and Field (1995, 2) noted that 'Frequently, competency-based standards and training inflate English skill requirements and use inappropriate methodologies'. Vocational courses also often overestimate the English skill requirements for both work and learners (p4).

- **lack of recognition of existing skills**

Government subsidised language and literacy programs are generally not accredited in relation to industry certificates. This leads to marginalisation of NESB employees from training reform initiatives (Mawer and Field 1995, 4).

Current practice in RPL is not well equipped to meet the needs of NESB people. Mawer and Field (1995, 4-5) identified that there is

- a lack of structural incentives for institutions to implement RPL
- a need for clear and consistent criteria to determine RPL
- a lack of awareness of RPL processes among potential applicants
- a need for resources to support applicants in the RPL process.

Lack of recognition of NESB workers' bilingual and inter-cultural skills, together with confusion of occupational competence with English competence, are common barriers (Bertone 1995, 13).

There is inadequate understanding and inappropriate implementation of RPL assessment procedures by employers, unions, industry trainers and middle management (NESB 1995).

Competency based assessment is often inadequate with respect to recognising experience, cultural skills and languages other than English (NESB, 1995).

- **inadequate access to information about training**

There is a lack of comprehensive data to inform the training and information needs of NESB workers (NESB, 1995).

There is a lack of appropriate information about training availability, content and delivery to potential trainees (NESB 1995, 28, Bertone 1995, 67).

Perceptions by potential NESB students and their parents generally reflect a low opinion and appreciation of VET. TAFE qualifications are generally not valued by NESB communities and target students, and there is a negative perception of the employment value of VET, which is seen as training for the unemployed (NSW TAFE 1995, 28). NESB parents are particularly important in influencing career decisions of their children, yet their knowledge of VET, in general, is limited (NSW TAFE 1995, 28).

- **training delivery**

There is a lack of clear, articulated pathways for NESB employees and selection processes for workers often reflect existing power relations (Mawer and Field 1995, 5).

Training delivered at inappropriate times poses particular barriers for NESB women. Stephens and Bertone (1995) examined companies where training in the workplace was not yet established. While over 85 per cent of NESB women interviewed considered training was worth doing, this willingness would not extend to participation in training outside work hours.

Training program infrastructure and pathways are barriers to entry and outcomes for NESB workers (NESB, 1995).

For NESB women, workplace training can be perceived to be 'too long' and require a commitment over a very lengthy period of time, rather than in smaller modules or chunks which can be perceived to be achievable. This is exacerbated when it has to be undertaken in unpaid time and is complicated by child care difficulties (Stephens and Bertone 1995, Bertone 1995, 67).

- **family responsibilities**

Inadequate provision of accessible and culturally appropriate child care facilities limit the participation of NESB women (Zinopoulos 1992, Stephens and Bertone 1995, Bertone 1995, VETEC 1993).

- **residential location**

Settlement locations of migrants often disadvantage them in relation to public transport, child care and other services. When rural and isolated, these effects are exacerbated (VETEC 1993, 32).

- **workplace culture**

Discriminatory attitudes are a key factor (Bertone 1995).

Mawer and Field (1995) reported

> The ability of many NESB workers to participate in training depends partly on the workplace culture in which they work, and the extent of support for learning. Management attitudes and the reward systems for training are key elements. (p3)

Current resources, change agents and processes do not focus on NESB people's issues in the workplace (NESB, 1995).

Access and equity tend to be dealt with in a passive way in many workplaces. There is a lack of good models and practical strategies for making training accessible (Mawer and Field, 1995).

NESB women tend not to be offered opportunities in the workplace to move to different types of work, nor to multi-skill (Stephens and Bertone, 1995).

- **costs**

Tuition fees are an issue, particularly for NESB women (Zinopoulos 1992, 6).

Administration fees, costs of textbooks, travel costs and sometimes the need to pay by cheque or credit card rather than cash, provide barriers, specially for women (Zinopoulos 1992, 6).

. . . limiting participation and outcomes

Key issues raised in the literature include mono-culturalism, productive diversity, cross-cultural awareness training, workplace and management culture, self-perception of NESB people in regard to training. There is a tendency for employers and trainers to focus on what is lacking in NESB people's skill profile, rather than on what they have to offer (NESB 1995).

- **learning environment**

Issues concerning language, culture, gender and lack of access to education have been seen by those guiding the National Training Reform Agenda (NTRA) as minority issues (Mawer and Field 1995).

The 'one size fits all', monocultural approach of NTRA often places NESB women, in particular, at a disadvantage (Mawer and Field 1995, Zinopoulos 1992, 56-57).

Inappropriate delivery modes and methods (including day long intensives, large groups with mixed abilities, detached lecture modes, cultural inappropriateness, over-emphasis on theory) (Mawer and Field 1995, 67).

- **curriculum**

  Most vocational curriculum is not linked to operator level training. Some vocational courses over-estimate the English language skills required in workplaces. There is a scarcity of financial resources and documented examples to assist standards bodies and curriculum developers (NESB 1995, Mawer and Field 1995, 26).

  Lack of integration of language and literacy training into vocational training severely limits participation (Bertone, 1995).

  The government subsidised language and literacy courses targeted at NESB people are not generally accredited in relation to industry certificates (Mawer and Field, 1995).

- **decision making**

  At both the local and National levels, NESB people tend to be under-represented in key decision making forums, bodies associated with the National Training Reform Agenda such as consultative and training committees and in workplace roles such as union officials, on-the-job trainers and workplace assessors (Mawer and Field 1995, 23, 35).

- **resources and models**

  Lack of coordination between different bodies and agencies means that few people are aware of the models of good practice and the resources that do exist (Mawer and Field 1995).

  Training programs that target the needs of NESB employees are generally not the result of major funding initiatives from the vocational training system, but from individuals and short term funding (Mawer and Field 1995).

  With increased cost of training, there is little agreement as to who is responsible for training NESB workers with limited language skills. Most funding for workplace education of NESB workers has been met by the Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) program (Mawer and Field 1995).

Strategies and Policies

. . . for improvement of access

- **encouraging recruitment**

Package and present VET to NESB groups in a way that facilitates their identification with the program by

- incorporating relevant images in promotional materials
- advertising in the ethnic media
- simplifying information presentation
- employing members of target communities to disseminate information on VET
- communicating clearer pathways for study and career/employment (NSW TAFE 1995, 29-30).

Review the model of career and vocational counselling used by schools and VET systems to identify and eliminate cultural and linguistic bias (NSW TAFE 1995).

Ensure that implementation strategies and accountability are integrated with policy (NESB 1995).

Implement recognition of training and the systematic combined assessment of the skills and language level of immigrants as a means of effective course referral (Zinopoulos 1992).

DEETYA and ANTA need to develop an information campaign using a range of publicity, multi-lingual where possible, aimed at informing NESB women of the Training Reform Agenda and its relationship to workplace reform - to be distributed widely (Bertone, 1995).

Address the specific needs of rural women from NESB (Zinopoulos 1992).

Incorporate affirmative action measures including NESB membership on workplace training committees (Bertone, 1995).

- **assisting entry**

Ensure student entry and selection guidelines are in line with access and equity principles (NSW TAFE 1995).

Review student entry and selection criteria to ascertain the appropriateness and validity of the English language/literacy level specified or assumed (NSW TAFE 1995).

Develop RPL processes beyond the level of stated policy, through well-resourced demonstration projects which focus on distinct issues related to RPL for NESB women (Bertone 1995, 69).

Provide appropriate training for staff enrolling students (Zinopoulos 1992). Provide VET staff with training in undertaking skills audits for people from non-English speaking backgrounds (Zinopoulos 1992).

. . . *for improvement of participation and outcomes*

- **enhancing the learning environment**

Implement principles of flexible delivery and open learning in the development and delivery of courses for NESB people (NSW TAFE 1995, 53).

Develop inclusive, responsive curriculum using inter-disciplinary teams (Mawer and Field 1995, 50).

Use bilingual training strategies where appropriate. Value bilingual skills as pathways to training and multiskilling (NESB 1995, viii).

Integrate English language and literacy training into existing industry training at accredited operator level (Bertone 1995, 71). Integrate language, literacy and cultural issues and understanding within VET and the training reform agenda (NESB 1995).

Schedule workplace training courses, wherever possible, during paid working time (Bertone 1995, 72).

Ensure cultural appropriateness and inclusivity of training content, and accessibility of this training to all sectors of the workforce, irrespective of language and literacy in English (NESB, 1995).

Improve workplace culture, promoting the value of diversity and training culture to employers (NESB, 1995).

- **providing professional development**

Establish cross-cultural awareness training for VET staff as an integral part of the overall human resource development plan at both State and National levels (Zinopoulos 1992, 66).

Involve qualified members of the target communities in the delivery of such training (NSW TAFE 1995, 53).

Include cultural understanding in management, supervisory and union courses (NESB 1995, vii).

Provide professional development for training providers on ways of incorporating productive diversity in their training, and on ways of disseminating information and sharing resources (NESB 1995, viii).

Train training providers and assessors of RPL to

- broaden their understanding of RPL
- value and integrate linguistic and cultural diversity in RPL
- integrate RPL into training and through enterprise bargaining into awards (NESB 1995, ix).

- **developing appropriate policy**

Include NESB people at the decision making levels (Zinopoulos 1992, 67, Mawer and Field 1995).

State/territory TAFE and Adult Migrant Education Service (AMES) systems should set targets for participation of NESB women, particularly those over 40, to ensure equitable participation (Zinopoulos 1992, 10).

VET systems should set a target for employment of educational support staff from the target communities to improve the quality of services and relations with those communities (NSW TAFE 1995).

Provide incentives such as subsidies, particularly to small businesses, to encourage them to employ young men and women from NESB communities, using as a model the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and Special Broadcasting Service Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander/NESB schemes (NSW TAFE 1995, 48).

- **conducting research and collecting data**

Investigate management perceptions and attitudes to the training of NESB workers, both men and women (Stephens and Bertone, 1995).

Explore reasons, from a management perspective, of differing patterns of training across industries (Stephens and Bertone, 1995).

Research and implement measures to recognise linguistic and cultural skills held by NESB people and examine the development of principles for bi-lingual training programs as an alternative to training in English (Bertone, 1995).

ANTA should make available to all training parties, National data on training participation by specific workforce groups (Bertone 1995, 70).

Collect data for NESB VET participation based on a nationally uniform definition of NESB (NSW TAFE 1995). Collect data on training and information needs of NESB people from all relevant agencies (including training providers, funding bodies etc) as part of funding accountability (NESB 1995, xi).

Make available data on the participation in VET for the target communities on an annual basis. To facilitate analysis, data should be disaggregated by ethnicity, age group, gender, and VET sub sector (NSW TAFE 1995).

Monitor impact and appropriateness of language audit tools (Zinopoulos 1992, 10).

Review accreditation guidelines to check appropriateness of language, literacy and culture (NESB 1995, vii).

Develop a methodology for reviewing competency standards to ensure they integrate past experience and cultural and linguistic understanding (NESB 1995, ix).

RESIDENTS IN RURAL AND REMOTE COMMUNITIES

Introduction

A snapshot of the situation for rural and isolated people in VET
From NBEET 1994d for 1993 (ANTA's 1996b analysis of VET participants did not include rural and isolated categories)

Overall, problems of access to VET in rural areas are associated with remoteness from a range of services and limited opportunities for employment once trained.

How is rural and isolated defined?

Rural is a term usually understood to mean 'not living in a capital city in Australia'. NBEET (1994a) defines rural as being non-metropolitan. Some rural areas are considered under a sub-category *remote* or *isolated* on a range of criteria based on considerable distance from other large settlements and services. The terms *remote* and *isolated* are used interchangeably in the literature. OTFE (1993b) combined the terms to include

> people who reside in a non-urban area more than 20 kilometres from where classes in which the student had enrolled will be delivered **or**
> people whose home address is outside the Metropolitan area or major provincial city during the school year in order to undertake TAFE training. (p9)

NBEET (1994d, 5) quoted the Budge Report which found that the

> non-metropolitan sector of Australia has a great deal of complexity and, given the enormous variation from region to region, it is difficult to be prescriptive in identifying education and training needs.

An index of remoteness, categorised by postcode and available from the Commonwealth Department of Primary Industries and Energy and the Department of Human Services and Health, incorporates two factors: distance from the nearest provincial or larger city, and personal distance which relates to population density. It is rarely recognised that the terms 'remote' and 'isolated' involve assumptions of urban centrality. From the perspective of people living in many isolated communities and towns, it is the cities and the services associated with them which are remote.

There are other measures of rurality and isolation. Queensland TAFE uses levels of movement required to undertake a course as one such measure. 'Rural Australia' according to *Rural data - Report of the Commonwealth Working Party* (DPIE 1992) comprises 'all geographic areas outside capital cities and urban centres with more than 100,000 inhabitants' (in NBEET 1994d). The DPIE system classifies non-metropolitan communities as remote, rural, town and provincial.

Some studies provide other definitions. Mageean (1990, 3) excludes from the rural definition, major metropolitan areas outside capital cities including Geelong, Gold Coast, Newcastle and Wollongong and those areas at most 45 minutes drive from the nearest TAFE Institute.

- **Rural and isolated people**

Barriers

. . . limiting access

Rodwell et al. (1996, 36-42) provided the best available, recent summary of literature on rural and remote issues. Some barriers identified from previous studies include:

- **distance and location**

Reduced access to a narrower range (and sometimes lesser quality) of VET programs and services without major relocation or personal cost (NBEET 1994d, 37, VETEC 1993, 25) provide significant barriers. Long distances to be covered, additional time and cost to access services similar to those available in metropolitan areas (NBEET 1994a).

- **information**

Information on program, careers and entry requirements is often limited (NBEET 1994a).

- **preparedness**

Lack of self confidence and negative previous experiences with education and training (NBEET 1991a, 36) are significant barriers, particularly for women (Davis 1992).

- **finance**

Distance from education and training providers places additional financial burdens on non-metropolitan people (NBEET 1991, 34).

- **support**

There are limited support structures for women (Davis 1992) and a lack of accommodation (particularly for apprentices and trainees on block release).

. . . *limiting participation and outcomes*

- **location and financial barriers**

As with access, rural and remote locations and financial implications of geographical isolation greatly limit participation and outcomes from VET.

- **child-care**

There is a lack of availability of occasional child care, particularly for women (NBEET 1991, 36).

- **work opportunities**

There are extremely limited work opportunities for participants and VET graduates who are geographically isolated.

- **accredited training**

There is limited access in rural and remote areas to large employers who provide comprehensive, accredited training (VETEC 1993, 25).

Strategies and Policies

. . . *addressing barriers to access*

- **improving support**

Establish local study centres (NBEET 1991, 36).

Provide access to occasional child care (mainly for rural women) (NBEET 1991, 36).
Provide accommodation, particularly for apprentices and trainees on block release (NBEET 1991, 36).

In remote communities

- **providing information**

There is a need to communicate realistic expectations of what can be delivered given limited resources (Rodwell et al. 1996).
Availability of up to date information for clients and prospective clients about programs, careers, entry requirements (NBEET 1991, 36) is critical.

- **considering on site factors**

  There is a need to take account of cultural and environmental factors (Rodwell et al. 1996, 10).

- **staffing**

  Staff should be culturally sensitive, with effective communication skills, empathy and flexibility (Rodwell et al. 1996, 9).

- **supporting flexible delivery**

  Incorporate face to face provision (access to a trainer or tutor at some stage and adequate resourcing) into flexible delivery mode (Rodwell et al. 1996, 9).

- **community support and ownership**

  Enlistment of strong community support and a sense of ownership is critical at all phases of provision (Rodwell et al. 1996, 9).

- **prioritise need**

  Priority to the most poorly served rural and remote regions (NBEET 1994a, 39), particularly to age 29 (NBEET 1994a, 39), and skills training for mature adults in the farm sector.

- **planning**

  Achieve coordinated planning between Commonwealth/States/Territory and local VET providers with cross sectoral provision and consultation (NBEET 1991, xv).

. . . *addressing barriers to participation and outcomes*

In rural and remote areas

- **costing**

  Make provision available at comparable personal cost to metropolitan people (NBEET 1991 xv, in Rodwell et al. 1996, 15).

- **consulting**

  Develop effective consultative mechanisms between Commonwealth/State/Territory/ local education and training providers to maximise resource usage (NBEET 1991 xv).

- **coordinating**

  Coordinate planning at the local level and cross-sectorally (NBEET 1991 xv).

- **involving**

  Facilitate client input into program (NBEET 1991 xv).

- **supporting flexible delivery**

  Diversify flexible modes of resourcing and delivery, but with face to face provision (access to a teacher or trainer) at some stage, recognising that such diversification is costly if tailored to individuals (NBEET 1991 xv; Rodwell et al. 1996, 9 and 15-16).

- **professional development**

  Improve expertise, resources and support for VET staff by enhanced opportunities for professional development (Mageean 1990, 36).

- **selecting staff**

  Select staff to ensure cultural sensitivity, effective communication skills, empathy and flexibility (Rodwell et al. 1996, 9).

COMMON THEMES FOR ALL GROUPS

Introduction

Before proceeding to identify barriers, strategies and policies identified in the literature which are common to all groups it is important to

- note some key findings from documented approaches to equity
- identify the gaps in knowledge in the equity research literature
- acknowledge the need for caution in extrapolating across target groups and particularly across providers.

Looking...

. . . across target groups

The target groups, definitions and approaches used in relation to equity in VET differ by State. The ANTA equity principle that 'planning and funding to improve access and equity in VET should be on the basis of real and credible outcomes which are measurable and on which progress is reported regularly' (ANTA 1996a, 5) is not easily achievable without consistent targeting and clear definitions for such groups.

ANTA has recently drafted an equity document "Equity 2001" (ANTA 1996a). Australian States have interpreted the strategies therein and implemented them in a range of ways which they consider meet the needs of their identified client groups. The most recent interpretations are available in the 1997 State responses to the ANTA Guidelines for National Industry Vocational Education and Training Plans (Section 4.3, Client Groups, p8).

The target groups in the current literature review do not include a number of groups which are recognised in the 1997 Training Profiles of some States; in particular unemployed people (recognised by SA, Tasmania and NSW) and people with inadequate social and functional skills in English language, literacy and numeracy (recognised by SA, Tasmania, NSW and Western Australia). Members of both of these target groups exhibit a high level of overlapping membership with several target groups in the literature examined, in particular, NESB, Indigenous and rural and remote groups, as well as with several outside of it: including people in correctional institutions, who are currently only targeted, within program profile, by Queensland (TAFE Queensland 1996).

State and regional targeting or benchmarking of additional groups is not, of itself, problematic. Queensland, for example, in 1997 targeted the Australian South Sea Islander community, approximately 70 per cent of whom reside in Queensland (Queensland State Training Profile 1996, 35). However, it is desirable that some coordination of effort should occur for both new and emerging groups.

. . . at what is being measured

This diversity of groups and approaches between States would not be as problematic for nationally based analysis if agreed equity measurement criteria were in place. It is currently very difficult to compare State VET outcomes, whether particular groups are targeted by those States or not. Without such common criteria it will not be possible to compare the outcomes of targeting approaches with those of mainstreaming, foreshadowed in the OTFE *Managing Diversity* Policy in Victoria in 1997.

Survey methodologies commonly used to measure outcomes may not be inclusive of each of the equity target groups considered in the current summary, nor of unemployed people and people without adequate social, literacy and numeracy skills. Hart and Belme (1996, 68) proposed reasonable adjustment to traditional evaluation approaches for 'special populations'. Therefore, interpretation of the survey results in the available literature for such groups, particularly on outcomes, needs to take account of the inclusivity of the methods employed.

. . . across providers

There has been a widespread assumption in the literature that approaches to access and equity are independent of VET provider type. Most of the available literature summarised by group, earlier in this report, focused on VET delivered in TAFE.

Universities have typically tended to reproduce existing socio-economic hierarchies. TAFE, by contrast, has traditionally been an important equity provider because it has catered for some people unable to access university. An important equity issue associated with VET access, and one largely absent from the literature examined, would appear to relate to fees and costs. Those with the least capacity to pay high fees and charges will make choices among providers based on the level of fees and charges that each applies, as well as on the nature of the programs and support services they offer. A limited capacity to pay will reduce the number of choices available.

Many students with the least capacity to pay high fees and charges will be from disadvantaged groups. Therefore, without financial assistance, many disadvantaged students will not have the same range of choices as more affluent students.

. . . at the diversity within groups

In general, the literature examined for each group, particularly for the Indigenous, NESB, rural and remote and disability groups showed a lack of recognition of geographical and cultural diversity within those groups. Analyses which consider all non-metropolitan people as a single rural group, all NESB people as a single cultural group and all Indigenous Australians as a single cultural group can fail to expose real and important contrasts within and between groups, regions and cultural sub-groups.

. . . at the flip side to disadvantage

The consideration of individual groups in the literature has generally been premised on an assumption of disadvantage. It is useful, before looking at common themes for these 'disadvantaged' groups, to consider briefly those groups which appear to be more, rather than less advantaged in VET (Eveline 1994).

Long (1996) looked at which groups were getting access to education and training from the ABS (1993) *Survey of Education and Training*. Golding (1996, 5) concluded from these studies that 'those more likely to access in-house training while working are older, already educated and trained to a higher level, and are much more likely to be involved in professional occupations, permanent, full-time and in the public sector. Long's analysis shows they are also more likely to be male'.

Similar but more pronounced trends were apparent for external training. Golding (1996, 5) concluded from Long's analysis that 'People who were Australian born, permanent, full-time or in the public sector were all twice as likely to have received external training as non-English speaking, casual, part-time or private sector workers'. People in more than one of the advantaged categories are presumably further advantaged. Taking account of widespread, recent trends towards casual, part-time work and privatisation, the issue of advantaged access to VET is clearly one which also applies beyond VET policy and within the domain of industry and enterprise access and equity policy.

. . . at equity within VET public provision

Last, but not least, it is important to formally recognise that access and equity policies and strategies already adopted by many of the public VET training providers have had positive outcomes. In a comprehensive examination of labour market and income consequences of participation in TAFE in particular, Long, McKenzie and Sturman (1996, v) concluded that compared to graduates in higher education, TAFE graduates 'come from a broader range of social and economic backgrounds. Only with regard to gender and its relationship to apprentice qualifications can TAFE be termed exclusive'. In relation to the labour market and income measures used in their report, they found 'all socio-economic groups, all achievement groups, both ethnic and geographic groups are equitably represented among TAFE graduates' (v).

Common barriers

It is difficult to find VET literature which specifically addresses common barriers for a range of groups. The literature which best identifies these common barriers is sometimes produced within equity related sections of State and National training plans or in literature associated with the strategies for their implementation. In this exploration of common themes in the literature, access, participation and outcomes have been considered together, rather than separately as in the summaries for individual groups.

. . . limiting access, participation and outcomes

This summary of common barriers is based on an elaboration of the structure of the NSW MEYA (undated) *'Achievement for everyone'* which identified many of the following.

- **Poverty and socio-economic status** are major factors limiting access as well as participation. While largely out of the control of education and training providers, lack of co-ordination of assistance and support systems exacerbates disadvantage and is inefficient in resource terms.

- **Physical barriers of access** to facilities apply particularly to people with physical disabilities.

- **Geographic and social isolation** present significant barriers associated with access to a narrower range of programs or additional travel, time and costs to access services similar to those available in metropolitan areas. Limited previous education and training experiences and fewer support options further compound disadvantage.

- **Social, racial and cultural stereotyping and attitudes** that result in bias, prejudice and discrimination in relation to gender, ethnicity and work role are entrenched through limiting images in the media, lack of exposure to options and experiences in school.

- **Employer and employee attitudes** limit expectations and opportunities of those already in the workforce who require additional education and training to respond to changing industry demands for skills. In some cases this limitation is associated with establishment by employers of unnecessary barriers to entry level training based on communication competencies. This may also lead to NESB and Indigenous employees perceiving that the training imposes literacy demands which they would be unable to meet.

- **Inaccessible information** about course availability, content, entry requirements, counselling and support options. This is often the result of information not being presented in targeted, clear and accessible ways through appropriate media.

- **Institutional barriers** created by structures and systems developed by providers.

- **Transition difficulties** between phases of education and training are often related to lack of prior education and training and institutional inflexibility in relation to entry points and pathways to accredited courses. While RPL processes may help, implementation practices may be inappropriate to effectively meet the needs of the target groups. Poor links between schools and VET and between VET and work exacerbate these difficulties.

  In addition to the above barriers, noted by NSW MEYA (undated), the following are also commonly referred to in the literature examined.

- **Program inflexibility** including lack of flexibility in timetabling, delivery modes and resources. This particularly disadvantages people with family and work responsibilities, people with disabilities and people living in rural and remote locations.

- **Program irrelevance** to target group members is often associated with a lack of

  - target group input (from clients, community and advocates) to decision making, program planning, development and delivery
  - acknowledgment of cultural diversity in program content
  - gender and cultural equity in competency standards development
  - recognition of specific client or group needs in selection of modes of delivery.

- **Lack of a culturally appropriate, inclusive and supportive learning environment** is often associated with an absence of

  - a target group 'critical mass'
  - mechanisms which prevent and deal with gender/cultural harassment
  - appropriate support mechanisms
  - professional development for teaching staff aimed at raising awareness and understanding of the special needs of specific target groups
  - sharing of models of good practice and resources between different bodies and agencies.
  - recognition that VET is a cultural activity

- **Fees and charges** exclude groups with low disposable income, making payment a key barrier, particularly in commercial providers (Barnett 1995, xi).

. . . *addressing barriers to access participation and outcomes*

This summary has been compiled through an analysis of the individual target group summaries and from the NSW MEYA (undated) *'Achievement for everyone'* and NBEET (1994a) which identified the following.

- **creating an equitable training market** by
  - embracing equity as a goal by all players in the VET system, including private providers
  - ensuring equitable participation in VET sector decision making by representatives of all equity target groups
  - motivating providers to address access and equity issues
  - setting targets for particular groups, with specific strategies, action plans and performance agreements based on consistent definitions
  - establishing outcomes monitoring processes which recognise client diversity and that a set of successful outcomes rather than a single outcome may be appropriate for different groups
  - recognising preparatory support costs (associated with recruiting, selecting and making ready) as separate and different from continuing support costs
  - recognising that additional costs are required to support students with overlapping membership of target groups and that diverse student bodies are likely to require wider, generic student services
  - adequately resourcing preparatory support which may apply particularly for some groups (eg rural and isolated) and continuing support, which applies to other groups (eg people with a disability)
  - monitoring to ensure equitable access to resources, applying the principle of differential resourcing to meet specific needs.

- **encouraging and recruiting** target group members by
  - advertising in ways that appeal to members of each target group
  - using promotional materials that focus on appropriate role models
  - using relevant media channels
  - appropriate resourcing of careers educators
  - involving ITABs, Group Training companies, industry associations and unions to promote employment and training of target group members to employers
  - improving links between schools and VET and between VET and work.

- **facilitating program entry** through
  - developing appropriate entry points and articulated pathways into accredited courses
  - providing clear and accurate information about the nature and requirements of courses
  - providing course counselling which is free of bias
  - developing and implementing appropriate RPL processes

  - adopting flexible timetabling and appropriate modes of delivery
  - establishing community based/local study centres especially for rural and remote clients.

- **ensuring program relevance** through

  - providing information, support, training and resources for those responsible for development and implementation
  - ensuring gender and cultural equity in competency standards development through equitable representation in the development process and use of appropriate methods of analysis and language
  - monitoring and evaluation of curriculum development processes to ensure inclusive curriculum and integration of RPL
  - where necessary, designing content specifically for a target group
  - recognising language and literacy development as essential to successful participation and integrating literacy and numeracy training into VET courses where necessary
  - involving target group community members in developing and delivering programs.

- **developing program flexibility** through

  - implementing appropriate flexible delivery incorporating adequate learner support, on-campus back-up and staff training
  - offering a range of assessment strategies that are fair and negotiable
  - building flexible, diverse structures and arrangements within and between institutions.

- **enhancing the learning environment** through

  - acknowledging that VET is a cultural activity
  - recognising student membership of one or more target groups while acknowledging the potential for diversity within a group
  - employing training personnel who will contribute to the creation of an organisation which is as internally diverse as the clients it serves
  - providing professional development to assist all training provider personnel to recognise, understand and reduce barriers
  - facilitating achievement of a 'critical mass' of target group participants
  - developing a climate free of any sort of harassment
  - identifying equity responsibility and providing generic and specialist support services with the capacity for early intervention
  - recognising family responsibilities including provision of accessible and appropriate child care
  - recognising that effort, cost and training expended in facilitating program entry and participation for individuals in a particular group has ongoing benefits for future clients.

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PART B:

Stocktake of Reports 1990 - 1995
Selected Summaries

REPORT SUMMARIES

WOMEN

Women's Participation In Non-Traditional Vocational Training

Publication Details

Vocational Education, Employment and Training Women's Taskforce, 1994, *Women's Participation In Non-Traditional Vocational Training*, DEET, Canberra.

Synopsis

This report is part of the Women in Entry-Level Training Project. It identifies strategies to assist Australian Vocational Certificate Pilot Projects to recruit and retain women in new vocational training pathways where women have been under represented in the past.

Does the report have an implementation/program or research/policy focus?

This report has an implementation/program focus. Its purpose is to assist personnel involved in the Australian Vocational Certificate Pilot Projects to increase participation of women in non-traditional entry level training positions.

Key concerns of the report

Key personnel involved in some of the work-based Australian Vocational Certificate (AVC) Pilot Projects were interviewed to identify steps they were taking to attract and recruit women into vocational training areas where women had been poorly represented in the past.

It became apparent during the course of the interviews, that in general, personnel involved in the AVC pilot projects lacked knowledge and experience of the systemic barriers restricting women's access to employment and training. Thus it was often difficult to develop appropriate initiatives which would effectively address issues related to women's participation, especially in the time frame of the AVC projects.

The report mentions that although lack of knowledge and experience does not necessarily reflect a lack of commitment to involving women in the AVC projects, it does, however, limit the success of the projects in developing measures to meet their equity objectives. A number of organisations interviewed, expressed frustration about the low numbers of women expressing interest in the AVC Pilot Projects. This suggested a need for a shift in focus from interviewing personnel involved in AVC Pilot Projects about the steps they were taking to attract and recruit women, to an emphasis on assisting AVC Pilot Projects to develop strategies that would enable them to better meet their equity objectives.

Key findings/recommendations

The report recommends that the following strategies be adopted by Australian Vocational Certificate Projects relevant to occupations where women have been under represented in the past.

They include:

- Advertising in ways that appeal directly to women;
- Developing promotional materials that include examples of women participating in the occupations pertinent to Australian Vocational Certificate projects;
- Organising promotional activities that include female trainees or women working in the industries or occupations relevant to Australian Vocational Certificate projects;
- Retaining female trainees;
- Training for all staff involved in the Australian Vocational Certificate projects;
- Gender inclusive teaching;
- Gender inclusive curriculum;
- Supporting female trainees in occupations where there are still few women employees;
- Achieving a 'critical mass' of female participants;
- Including affirmative action and equal opportunity in industrial relations modules;
- Monitoring and evaluating strategies that seek to increase women's participation.

The report stresses that these strategies on their own will not necessarily contribute to a change in women's employment patterns. Other ingredients for change include:

- A commitment from management to develop and implement these strategies; and
- The involvement in this process, of personnel with experience and knowledge of the systemic barriers that affect women's access to employment and training.

The report provides an example of a situation where assistance was given from an outside agency to an AVC Pilot Program to implement some of the recommendations. The Victorian Electrical and Electronic Industry Training Board, despite a commitment from the Board and the major employer (Electrical and Electronic Group Training) to recruit women, initially experienced a disappointing number of enquiries from prospective female trainees in their AVC Pilot Project. The organisation Affirmative Action in Training Inc. (AAIT Inc.) assisted in the development of strategies which led to a better response from women. These included advertisements specifically inviting women to apply (AAIT Inc. has an exemption to advertise for 'women only' under the Equal Opportunity Act, 1984), and a feature article in a major newspaper about women in non-traditional occupations. It also included the use of established networks in TAFE, secondary colleges and CES offices to inform women about the AVC Pilot Project, joint presentations to schools encouraging women to apply, careers counselling for women who expressed interest in the AVC Pilot Project. The Project Manager of the Victorian Electrical and Electronic Industry Training Board was interviewed by the media where he particularly encouraged women to apply.

The report provides clear, achievable strategies for implementation to improve women's participation in 'non-traditional' vocational training.

Women and TAFE: A National Plan of Action

Publication Details

Vocational Education and Training Division, Department of Education, Employment and Training, 1991, *Women and TAFE: A National Plan of Action*, DEET, Canberra.

Synopsis

The TAFE systems are the largest providers of vocational education and training in Australia. In 1989 women students comprised 57% of the total enrolments in TAFE, but were concentrated in a narrow range of courses, mostly non-accredited. The aim of *Women and TAFE: A National Plan of Action* is to improve education, training and skills formation opportunities and outcomes for women. It recognises that in order for women to have equal access to, and participation in, TAFE, systematic affirmative action is needed.

The National Plan includes six objectives which set priorities for action. They are:

- Improve paths of entry for all women into accredited TAFE courses;
- Improve women's successful participation in vocational training;
- Improve the TAFE learning environment and physical environment for women;
- Improve support services for women;
- Ensure that women benefit equally from training for industry and award restructuring;
- Increase the participation of women in TAFE decision-making.

National targets were established for each of the objectives. The document provides background information under each of the objectives and includes examples of initiatives which have already been implemented. The National Plan was evaluated in 1994.

Does the report have an implementation/program or research/policy focus?

Women and TAFE: A National Plan of Action has an implementation focus. Its aim is to improve education, training and skills formation opportunities and outcomes for women. The introductory comments in this document refer to the gender segmented nature of the Australian workforce. There is an acknowledgement that TAFE has a role to play in reducing this gender segmentation.

Key concerns of the report

The TAFE system is fundamental to improving women's education and training opportunities (and job and career options), as the TAFE systems are the largest providers of vocational education and training in Australia. At the time of writing, women students comprised 57% of the total enrolments in TAFE (1989), but were concentrated in a narrow range of courses, mostly non-accredited. The history of apprenticeship and trade training in TAFE colleges has traditionally excluded women. The resulting TAFE environment is one which is not yet inclusive of women.

The Action Plan is a cooperative approach between Commonwealth and State ministers to establish a framework for a national core training curriculum and accredited system, in order to be able to be more responsive to Australia's training needs via closer links with industry.

Key findings/recommendations

The National Plan has six objectives. At the time of writing, national targets were established for each of the objectives.

- Improve paths of entry for all women into accredited TAFE courses;
- Improve women's successful participation in vocational training;
- Improve the TAFE learning environment and physical environment for women;
- Improve support services for women;

- **Ensure that women benefit equally from training for industry and award restructuring;**
- Increase the participation of women in TAFE decision-making.

National projects were also established to support the six objectives.

The Plan includes numerous examples of strategies which had already been implemented in the various States and Territories.

Performance indicators focused on comparing the situation of women to men, as the National Plan aimed to alter the unequal balance between women and men. They were:

- Students - the ratio of women to men in accredited TAFE courses;
- Resources - the proportion of resources allocated to mainly male (60%+), and mainly female, study areas;
- Staff - the ratio of women to men who are:
  - employed in management in TAFE;
  - on decision-making bodies in TAFE;
  - in all staff development activities.

The Women's Standing Committee of VEETAC (The Vocational Education Employment and Training Advisory Committee) was responsible for monitoring the progress made in implementing the Action Plan, recommending changes during the process of implementation, and producing an annual report to the Ministerial Council in March each year which included:

- Progress toward the targets nationally, as measured by the performance indicators;
- Reports from the Commonwealth and each State and Territory system on progress and achievements;
- Complementary activity by other agencies;
- Progress on the national projects;
- New approaches, targets and performance indicators resulting from the national projects, or the data base.

The Action Plan identified the following areas for action:

In order to enable women to participate across the range of TAFE provision, there was a need to ensure action in relation to the following:

- All curriculum, teaching methodologies and materials are gender inclusive;
- Course counselling is free of gender based assumptions;
- Appropriate responses to the education and training needs of all women from particularly disadvantaged groups are developed;
- There is flexible timetabling and delivery models available to women;
- Women are actively encouraged to study in areas where they are under represented and are provided with appropriate support services and role models;
- Mechanisms are put into place to prevent sex based harassment and deal with grievances;
- There is access to adequate and appropriate child care;
- There is provision of appropriate entry points for women and articulated pathways into accredited courses;
- Women are not disadvantaged through the resource allocation process, fees imposition or by TAFE's response to changing training markets and technological innovation;
- Women participate equitably in the decision making process at all levels of TAFE operations;

- Women's prior learning is formally acknowledged and due credit given.

The national projects established to support the six objectives of the National Plan and funded for 1991 were:

- Recognition of Prior Learning;
- Aboriginal Women's Needs;
- Women of Non-English Speaking Background;
- Women with Disabilities;
- Monitoring the Impact of Change;
- Marketing Strategy;
- Prompting an Environment Free of Sexual Harassment of Women in TAFE;
- Skills of TAFE Teachers in Teaching Women;
- Gender and Curriculum.

The report entitled *WAVE: Women and Vocational Education: An Evaluation of the National Plan of Action Women and TAFE* (Onkaparinga Institute of TAFE, S.A., 1994) evaluated the success of the National Plan; however, this report has been extremely difficult to obtain).

Recognition Of Prior Learning: Implications For Women

Publication Details

Davis, S. 1992, Recognition and Assessment Centre, Broadmeadows College of TAFE, *Recognition Of Prior Learning: Implications For Women*, A National Project of *Women and TAFE: A National Plan of Action*, DEET, Canberra.

Synopsis

The *Recognition of Prior Learning: Implications for Women* report examines the implications of the recognition of prior learning (RPL) model of assessment for women's access to training, and acknowledgement of skills. It identifies and recommends a national approach to the implementation of RPL, so that women are able to access training for the purpose of gaining credentials and improving career paths. Research to determine factors influencing the RPL process completed in the course of the project included interviews with three groups of women, those who had applied for RPL and completed the process, those who had applied for, and not completed, the RPL process, and those who had not applied for RPL. In addition to the national recommendations, information on specific implications of the RPL model of assessment for women are included. The report argues that the concept of RPL has generated strong interest from various groups, including industry and training providers and, in order to ensure the successful implementation of RPL nationally, and equitable outcomes for women, further research needs to be undertaken and additional resources allocated.

RPL was defined as 'the acknowledgement of skills and knowledge obtained through formal training (industry and education), work experience and/or life experience no matter where … attained… .The main focus of RPL was what has been learnt, not how it has been learnt'.

Does the report have an implementation/program or research/policy focus?

This report has an implementation/program focus, substantiated by the findings of the research completed in the course of the project.

Key concerns of the report

The aims of the project were to:

- Identify and recommend a national approach to the implementation of the Recognition of Prior Learning for women;
- Identify the implications of RPL on women's access to training;
- Identify a methodology for the assessment of traditional female skills and the relevance of their recognition in vocational education in two fields of study - Child Care and Business/Secretarial Studies;
- Document a strategy for RPL which can be implemented in TAFE colleges;
- Report on issues pertinent to equity issues and the recognition and acquisition of skills formation necessary for credentialled training.

A national survey and structured small group discussions conducted as part of the research for the project highlighted a number of significant issues, including:

- There is a strong demand from both women students and staff in TAFE colleges for the implementation of RPL;
- RPL can significantly reduce study time for women, which may improve access to training;
- The interview/discussion needs to be conducted in a supportive, encouraging and interactive way, to enhance women's ability to identify skills;
- Women often undersell and undervalue their skills and need support and encouragement in the RPL process; some women experience difficulty in interpreting the term 'life experience' and relating this to learning outcomes;
- RPL implementation must be adequately resourced and supported by staff training and college policy taking into consideration issues pertinent to women;
- Research indicates that the RPL process requires a certain level of competency in the English language and knowledge of the educational system, therefore the use of plain English is an important factor to ensure women's equitable access to the RPL process;
- Current implementation practices requiring students to enrol in a course prior to applying for RPL may pose a barrier for women applicants;
- There may be varying standards of assessment among RPL assessors which can disadvantage women;
- Curriculum development should encompass competency-based training principles and should be gender inclusive, including RPL.

Key findings/recommendations

Thirteen national recommendations were made:

- The RPL Model of Assessment as described in the report is an appropriate mechanism for recognition of women's skills on a national level in both the industry and education sectors, particularly in the areas of Child Care and Secretarial Studies where women have a high profile;
- As the RPL model is based on principles which have formed the foundation for the policy on recognition developed by the VEETAC Working Party on Recognition, implementation guidelines on RPL in each State/Territory should incorporate general and specific issues, relevant to women;
- The implementation of RPL nationally should be based on agreed targets and timelines. VEETAC should recommend a realistic target for a percentage of adult TAFE entrants to receive credit as a result of RPL;

- In the implementation of RPL and implications for women, TAFE providers on a national level should establish a network for the sharing of documents and distribution of resources and documenting of best practices in RPL;
- Further research should be undertaken in the area of RPL resource development, aimed at the following groups:
    - TAFE support staff and administration;
    - Potential RPL applicants;
    - RPL assessors and course experts to ensure that women applicants have adequate support mechanisms throughout the RPL process.
- The RPL model of assessment should be used to actively encourage women on a national basis to access training for the purpose of gaining credentials and improving career paths;
- The importance of trained assessors should be recognised and the training should prepare them for their role in assisting women applicants translate informally acquired skills to professional settings;
- RPL assessors should be trained in cross-cultural awareness, sensitivity to the special needs of women and in drawing out skills of female applicants;
- Resources should be developed to assist in the implementation of RPL so that information is available in plain English and major community languages to minimise language barriers to potential applicants, including non-English speaking background women;
- *Women and TAFE: A National Plan of Action* should undertake to publicise nationally, information on RPL and its potential benefits for women in gaining skills recognition for access to further training and career advancement. This information should be made available in education, community and industry settings;
- Longitudinal research should be undertaken to assess the long-term effect of RPL on women's career and training prospects;
- The VEETAC Competency Based Training Working Party should be informed that curriculum relevant to traditional female areas of study must be rewritten into competency based training terms;
- The gender inclusive curriculum guidelines developed as a national project by National Plan of Action for Women in TAFE should take into account the special issues affecting women and the implementation of RPL.

The report also recommends concrete strategies concerning the implementation of RPL in TAFE colleges on a national basis. These relate to:

- Information prior to RPL application;
- Support available for making the application;
- The application form;
- Gathering support evidence;
- Support person;
- The RPL interview;
- General.

The report states that the Victorian RPL Model of Assessment has been implemented nationally, TAFE teachers and other educators have been informed/trained in the Victorian RPL processes and case studies using these procedures have been completed in each State and Territory.

A critical factor in the selection of the Victorian RPL model of assessment was the inclusion in the model of life skills and unpaid work. It also had clearly defined principles and a process, together with a nationally implemented training program. The report claims that although there are other RPL models of assessment, the Victorian model is the only one which has been implemented nationally.

The Effects Of Fees/Costs/Charges Of The Participation Of Women In Post-Compulsory Education And Training

Publication Details

Women's Bureau, DEET, 1993, *The Effects Of Fees/Costs/Charges on the Participation of Women in Post-Compulsory Education and Training*, AGPS, Canberra.

Synopsis

The main focus of this report was to identify the extent of the various kinds of fees/costs/charges in post-compulsory education and training and their impact on women's access to training in the TAFE and higher education sectors and training offered by private providers. Four basic areas of post-compulsory education and training were identified in order to establish what fees/costs/charges are levied against students: the higher education sector, the TAFE sector, privately provided training, and work-based training and retraining.

The report documents what the authors believe to be substantial gender biases in some of the structural features of the post-compulsory education and training system in Australia. They included: the blatantly different treatment of apprentices (mainly males) and trainees (mainly females); the flat rate of HECS across all courses; and the pitching of privately-provided courses towards female clients, with the possible redirection of public resources towards 'male' courses.

Does the report have an implementation/program or research/policy focus?

The report has a research/policy focus.

Key concerns of the report

The terms of reference were:

- To provide an overview of the range of fees/costs/charges which apply in post-compulsory education and training by sector;
- To report on any measured effects of such fees/costs/charges on the participation of women;
- To identify any new areas of training which may be adversely affected by imposition of fees, etc.;
- To identify emerging policy issues which Women's Education, Employment and Training Advisory Group (WEETAG) should address in the context of the review of Entry Level Training and the Austudy Review.

The report is structured largely according to the terms of reference and identifies what the authors believe to be substantial gender biases in some of the structural features of the post-compulsory education and training system in Australia. They include:

- The blatantly different treatment of apprentices (mainly males) and trainees (mainly females);
- The flat rate of HECS across all courses;
- The pitching of privately-provided courses towards female clients, with the possible redirection of public resources towards 'male' courses.

Key findings/recommendations

Note: Recommendations were not included in the report A summary of the findings is set out below:

- Fees/costs/charges in the TAFE sector are complicated and vary between States/Territories, colleges, streams and courses. It was not possible, however, to provide a complete or even partial audit of the fees/costs/charges imposed in the TAFE sector. Something that is clear is that the extent of fees/costs/charges in TAFE is escalating. TAFE fees are mainly levied up-front, on a semester basis (which may be relevant to the potential impact on participation);
- The fees/costs/charges levied by private training providers are considerable, and in some cases are twice the equivalent TAFE fees. Much of the privately provided training appears to be unashamedly pitched at female clients, particularly recent school leavers;
- The area of work-based training and retraining is a murky one. There is a stark contrast between the principle of (mainly male) apprentices being paid for the time spent off work undertaking training, and the explicit discounting of (mainly female) trainees' wages for the time spent off-site undertaking training;
- Paid study leave is uncommon (one fifth of workers undertook an education qualification in 1988) however, the proportion of apprentices receiving employer support was 75 per cent. It appears that most of the new training which is the result of award restructuring is undertaken at the employees' expense;
- The authors note that the work of Power and Robertson (1988) shows that the Higher Education Administration Charge (HEAC) had a disproportionate impact on female part-time and external students, especially mature-age women;
- When considering the age-earnings profiles of qualified individuals, the returns are reasonably high when taking into account that wages are paid to those undertaking trades training. For those undertaking non-trades training, the majority of whom are female, the investment impact of higher fees/costs/charges is likely to be greater;
- The sociological and psychological impacts of new or higher fees/costs/charges is also important to consider. For many females, command over family/household resources may be an issue, or females may have a higher aversion to risk than males. Some women may fear that there may be further escalations of fees/costs/charges likely during the course of their studies.

The report stresses that it is important that a close watching brief be maintained on the effects of fees/costs/charges on the overall participation of women in post-compulsory education and training. It recommends that this be maintained on two specific areas:

- The area of privately provided training courses, where much of the marketing appears to be pitched at women. The authors suggest that one future scenario may be that in the face of ongoing excess demand for training places, females may be forced to take up places in the expensive privately-provided system, and limited public funds will be directed to maintaining or increasing places in training courses more popular with males;
- The area of the structured entry level training system, which includes some of the more controversial recommendations of the Carmichael Report, which integrates apprenticeships and traineeships and imposes the concept of a trainee wage to all entry-level training. The authors question whether it is credible that some of the protection accorded to apprentices will be dismantled, especially since apprentices largely work in industrially strong areas. A watching brief needs to be kept on the women's access to entry-level training, especially in the non-traditional areas, and that structured training be extended to predominantly female occupations.

Some other tentative findings from the report include:

- The earnings advantage of TAFE training appears to be lower than that of higher education;
- The earnings advantage of trades training is higher than that of non-trades training;
- The return to trades training may be quite large if account is taken of the wages earned while training;
- The return to traineeship training, however, will not nearly be so large because of the explicit discounting of salaries while training;
- Access for lump sums within households is an issue within the TAFE sector where up-front fees or their equivalent are charged;
- What little evidence that exists points to some price-sensitivity in the demand for TAFE training, particularly at higher levels of fees/costs/charges and among those not receiving exemptions.

Women in Entry Level Training: Policy Review of the 1987 Report Women in Apprenticeship

Publication Details

DEET, 1991, *Women in Entry Level Training: Policy Review of the 1987 Report Women in Apprenticeship*, AGPS, Canberra.

Synopsis

Women in Entry Level Training: Policy Review of the 1987 Report Women in Apprenticeship is a review of the 1986 *Women in Apprenticeship* report. Its aim was to establish whether the strategic approaches and recommendations of the Report were still relevant.

The priority areas of need were identified as: improving women's awareness of the trades; encouraging women to apply for positions as entry-level trainees; removing barriers faced by women seeking to undertake trade-based pre-employment courses or to structured entry-level training; removing structural and institutional barriers to women's entry to the trades; increasing the number of women in structured entry-level training where Commonwealth and State Governments have the capacity to do so; increasing the representation of women in the institutional decision-making process; and instituting measures to monitor and evaluate progress.

The report makes a total of twenty six recommendations, many of which are amendments of the original recommendations made in the *Women in Apprenticeship* report. A number of issues requiring further investigation were also identified and the need for a national comprehensive strategy was stressed. The Overview of the report also includes a number of possible strategies to increase the proportion of women in non-traditional trades under each of the priority areas of need.

Does the report have an implementation/program or research/policy focus?

The report has a policy review/implementation focus. In 1989, when the *Women in Apprenticeship* report was three years old, the annual meeting of the Commonwealth/State Training Advisory Committee (COSTAC) agreed to review the policy to establish whether the strategic approaches and recommendations of the Report were still relevant.

Key concerns of the report

The priority areas of need were identified as:

- Improving women's awareness of the trades;
- Encouraging women to apply for positions as entry-level trainees;
- Removing barriers faced by women seeking to undertake trade-based pre-employment courses or to structured entry-level training;
- Removing structural and institutional barriers to women's entry to the trades;
- Increasing the number of women in structured entry-level training where Commonwealth and State Governments have the capacity to do so;
- Increasing the representation of women in the institutional decision-making process;
- Instituting measures to monitor and evaluate progress.

Key findings/recommendations

1. The national policy statement relating to women in structured entry-level training should be adopted. This statement specifies underlying principles, objectives and priority areas of need.

2. Government should develop strategies involving direct approaches to industry to recruit and train female entry-level trainees, giving consideration to possible innovative uses of existing Commonwealth and State structured entry-level training support programs, including the Innovative Training Program. This strategy should also involve approaches to the relevant unions and also employer bodies and Industry Training Boards seeking their active support.

3. Given the importance of attitudinal factors in encouraging women into the trades, promotional activities, marketing and professional development should be undertaken as a primary means of addressing this problem. Girls should be given opportunities to undertake supportive non-traditional work experience.

4. In the light of the positive results achieved to date with the 'Tradeswomen on the Move' (TWOM) projects conducted by a number of States and Territories, this program should be maintained to promote non-traditional trades to young women, in primary and secondary schools as well as elsewhere. This program has been a good pilot. It should now be pursued as a full program. All States and Territories should consider mounting initiatives of this nature and develop long-term strategies to incorporate TWOM into other strategies. It is recommended that the guidelines be made more flexible to allow for new and innovative approaches to be incorporated into TWOM, such as the Work Experience Program in South Australia.

5. Given the present economic imperative to utilise fully all of Australia's pool of human talent, the high level of government funding provided to Group Training Schemes (GTS) and the advantageous position of GTS with respect to employment of female entry-level trainees, it is recommended that:

    - Employment of female entry-level trainees in non-traditional trades remain a primary objective of GTS;
    - Operational guidelines which outline strategies aimed at achieving the objective be developed by GTS;

- The establishment of a process to monitor the achievement of this objective be successful achievement of this objective (and that this) be a criterion for continued Government funding of GTS;
- There should be better linkages of GTS with preparatory courses for women;
- Group Training Companies' management should have access to, and be encouraged to participate in, professional development activities specifically relevant to the recruitment, selection and retention of women in structured entry-level training, including the production of a kit to assist staff of Group Schemes acquire the skills needed in the selection process.

The Working Party on Entry-Level Training should be consulted by the Working Party currently carrying out the review of Group Schemes. Further, it is recommended that VEETAC ask the Working Party reviewing GTS to consider these recommendations in framing its report.

6. In light of the successes achieved in some States, it is recommended that:

    - Successful initiatives which use Trade-Based Pre-Employment (TBPE), including preparatory courses, as a way of increasing the access of women to non-traditional trades be examined, with a view to extending these initiatives to other States when possible;
    - The implications of the removal of Commonwealth funding for TBPE training, except for preparatory courses for women, be examined in the light of the importance of this form of training in increasing the access for women to non-traditional trades.

7. In recognition of the positive contribution made by registers of women in non-traditional occupations, which perform an important function integral to the support of women in non-traditional trades, governments should work to establish permanent registers in the States and Territories. Information about the Registers should be included in the VEETAC publication *Essential Features of Australian Training Systems.*

8. While it is recognised that much work has been done in relation to restrictive provisions in Federal and State Awards, significant barriers still exist. The issue can only be addressed by pressing the matter with the parties to Awards, with the support of the CAI and ACTU. The issue should be raised at the National Labour Consultative Committee to investigate that further action is required. Governments should take action where possible to progress the issue with these bodies.

9. The CES should increase its efforts to encourage women into non-traditional trades, and give particular attention to developing innovative approaches. All CES staff should receive training in relation to the recruitment of women into non-traditional trades and all staff should go through an Induction Training Program (ITP). DEET, through the CES, should continue to develop target setting processes for women in non-traditional trades.

10. The States and the Commonwealth should base the development of individual strategies on the Framework of Possible Strategies. State and Territory Governments should develop implementation strategies to complement these recommendations which list the persons or organisations responsible, the resources required and timelines for implementation, and should be required to report to the relevant body on an annual basis.

11. Where possible and appropriate, targets should be incorporated into initiatives developed and implemented at Commonwealth and State/Territory levels. This approach requires analysis of current levels of female representation, forward estimates of achievable goals and regular reporting back on program outcomes.

12. VEETAC should be responsible for the on-going co-ordination of activities in relation to the implementation of the Recommendations of this Report and should monitor progress on Commonwealth and State/Territory strategies by a system of annual reporting. There should be annual reporting through VEETAC to MOVEET by a Standing VEETAC Committee of Review of the Participation of Women in Entry-Level Training.

13. As appropriate, VEETAC should provide assistance to, or seek assistance from, Commonwealth and State/Territory agencies involved in women's issues in order to increase the number of women in non-traditional entry-level training. Liaison between VEETAC and such agencies should be maintained.

14. Two innovative training projects should be funded by DEET. The first would be a study of a group of girls who did/did not enter structured entry-level training and their reasons for doing so, and an associated study of employers. The second would be an action research project to document the problems/barriers to women's participation in entry-level training and to work with employers on strategies for removing them. The further comprehensive review proposed in Recommendation 15 could draw upon this work.

15. That VEETAC support the establishment of a comprehensive review of the current and emerging issues affecting the participation of women in non-traditional entry-level training programs including, but not being restricted to, apprenticeship training. Strategies should be designed to achieve improvements in this area and should reference the responsible body, the time frames and the necessary resources. Issues raised in Section 4 of the Report should be addressed. In particular, there is a need for attention to be given to the demand side of the equation and for the identification of good employer practice. If significant progress is to be made in the participation of women in non-traditional entry-level training, careful monitoring and evaluation of strategies must be undertaken.

16. Ministers for Education and Training should be requested to develop strategies in recognition of the need for women to develop career options including the non-traditional trades. Such strategies should include professional development activities and initial education and training of Guidance Officers, Career Counsellors, TAFE training advisers and TAFE, primary and secondary teachers.

17. Decision-making bodies in the vocational training area, including Industry Training Boards, should be encouraged to include and increase female representation. The Commonwealth, as the funding body, should require Industry Training bodies to develop and implement equity and access strategies.

18. (i) Education authorities should ensure that all new developments in school-based vocational programs recognise the need to encourage young women to participate and have specific strategies in place to ensure this; (ii) Employers and unions should participate in the development of initiatives at all levels of schooling and should be encouraged to develop equity and access principles. A number of such initiatives have been developed by Government, unions and employers in order to maximise credits in relation to subsequent training. Where appropriate, these should be used as models.

19. Educational authorities should investigate the possibility of registers of employers who are prepared to provide work experience programs for girls, on a regional basis. (The ACT already has such a register and New South Wales is in the process of establishing one).

20. Apprenticeship and traineeship systems should continue to be integrated to form a unified structured entry-level training system.

21. States and Territories should co-operate through VEETAC in developing an improved database in the structured entry-level training area which can be disaggregated by gender and which would assist in monitoring the impact of the changing demographics on women's employment and training needs.

22. In any redistribution of DEET/State/Territory funding for training, consideration should be given to its effect on equitable participation in structured entry-level training.

23. All existing (and any future) training advisers within State Training Authorities should be trained in equity principles. Strategies for establishing and resourcing other support structures, related to women's participation in training, especially entry-level training, should also be maintained and further developed.

24. That VEETAC support the establishment of a small working group to prepare an implementation plan for the Recommendations of the Report on *Women in Apprenticeship*. This working group will present the implementation strategy to MOVEET for endorsement at its first meeting in 1991. Membership of the implementation working group should be drawn from the COSTAC Working Party on Women in Apprenticeship and should include the following:
    - Commonwealth;
    - State/Territory;
    - Employer;
    - Union.

25. VEETAC should publish the Recommendations, National Policy Statement and Strategies in this Report as a separate document for wide circulation, subject to the approval of the relevant Ministers.

26. That VEETAC recommend to the Ministers of Vocational Education, Employment and Training that they support and endorse this Report and its Recommendations.

The VEETAC Women's Standing Committee established a working group to oversee the implementation of the Report.

The report states that throughout the meetings of the VEETAC Women's Standing Committee Working Party, a range of issues affecting the participation of women in apprenticeship was addressed. Many of those issues had emerged in recent years and, in some instances, were outside the recommendations of the 1987 Report. A number of recommendations was made which referred to these issues and included the involvement of Ministers for Education and Training, educational authorities, decision-making bodies in the vocational training area such as Industry Training Boards, employers and unions, and, training advisers within State Training Authorities. These recommendations are included on pages 17-18 of the full report.

The Overview of the report also includes a number of possible strategies to increase the proportion of women in non-traditional trades under each of the Priority Areas of Need. For example, under the objective 'Improve women's awareness of the trades', the report suggests strategies such as:

- Innovative approaches to promoting trades to women e.g. similar initiatives to the 'Tradeswomen on the Move' programs;
- Coordination of efforts with Apprenticeship Weeks/Careers Expos; and
- Publicity brochures directed at particular trades/industries.

Different Futures: A Study of the Critical Factors Encouraging Women's Access to Non-Traditional Entry-Level Training

Publication Details

Lyall, K. and Hawkins, S. 1993, *Different Futures: A Study of the Critical Factors Encouraging Women's Access to Non-Traditional Entry-Level Training*, Department of Employment, Education and Training, Canberra.

Synopsis

The report was the result of a recommendation made in the VEETAC Women's Standing Committee's policy report Women in Entry Level Training. The project brief was to: identify the critical factors in occupational choices of women who do and do not enter non-traditional training; identify the critical factors in employer decisions to employ women in non-traditional jobs and; evaluate the experience of entry-level training for those women who have chosen non-traditional training. The project team focused on identifying the positive factors that contribute to women's career choice, rather than the barriers preventing women from entering non-traditional trades.

The major findings of the research are that women are strongly career minded and that they are most often attracted to people-oriented occupations and the opportunity to work in teams. The research findings are set out in two main sections: the first based on the survey of women in training/employment, and the second on the study of employers of apprentices. Recommendations are included, which, if implemented, will increase the participation of women in non-traditional trades. An employer recruitment package is a separate document resulting from the research.

Does the report have an implementation/program or research/policy focus?

The report has both a research and implementation focus.

Key concerns of the report

The report states that although the research was separated into two clearly defined components, often interrelated findings emerged from different aspects of the research.

Key findings/recommendations

The recommendations are presented in five parts, referring to the current main players in the entry-level training system. However, the designation of recommendations to particular departments or sectors is not intended to exclude other organisations from implementing them.

VEETAC Women's Standing Committee (DEET)

It is recommended that:

- With respect to AVC pilot projects that:
  - Guidelines are issued to State management committees which encourage the funding of a proportion of AVC pilots focusing on women as a group;
  - These guidelines further encourage a proportion of AVC pilots focusing on adult women's access to trade entry-level training;
  - VEETAC WSC ensure that, in the monitoring and implementation process introduced by State management committees, attention is given to the likely impact of the AVC on women's access to non-traditional trades;
  - Guidelines facilitating women's access to non-traditional trades be incorporated in the final AVC system;
  - VEETAC WSC establish a target number of pilot projects which focuses on women's access to non-traditional trades through the AVC.

- Pilot projects be established which explore women's access to the work experience component of the AVC;
- DEET produce and market nationally the employer recruitment package developed as part of this project;
- The development and production of the marketing/promotion of TAFE should:
  - Demonstrate how TAFE colleges can market non-traditional courses to women in order to increase the number of applications from women by highlighting interpersonal skills and social values involved in such courses; and
  - Draw on the findings of the *Different Futures* research, and the issues and directions outlined in the *Marketing TAFE to Women* issues paper (national project).

- An 'applying for apprenticeships' package for women be developed. That this package build on existing resources, including the results of the *Different Futures* research, specifically highlighting what employers look for in apprentices and expect from applicants;
- A project be established to design a range of aptitude tests which are without gender bias. That this project include a marketing and education component to inform employers of the tests' availability, and the best uses of aptitude tests as an employment tool;
- A video be produced which highlights the comparison of career decisions and experiences of women in non-traditional trades with women in traditional occupations. That this video:

  - Be based on the transcripts of the group interviews from Component One of the *Different Futures* research; and
  - Be disseminated to all secondary schools and TAFE colleges, with a recommendation that it be integrated into other career education strategies.

- TWOM be provided with triennium funding in each State and Territory. That these funding arrangements:

  - Retain State autonomous operation of each TWOM project, within the framework of DEET guidelines; and
  - Provide resources for biannual national TWOM coordinators meetings and planning activities.

State/Territory Training Authorities

It is recommended that:

- An evaluation be conducted into the initiatives of State and Territory training authorities encouraging women to consider non-traditional trades that have yielded positive outcomes. That this evaluation ascertain which strategies have been most successful and develop a proposed model for further action;
- The existing curricula in TAFE pay particular attention to the communication skills required, particularly in trade entry-level training;
- Given the high use in some States of pre-vocational and pre-trade courses as a recruitment source, that these courses should be maintained and should be required to operate under gender equity guidelines.

Education Institutions

It is recommended that:

- Education authorities develop a 'women into trades' development program for careers educators which includes:

  - Guidelines on how to present trades in a way that will interest women and girls, specifically emphasising the social values and interpersonal skills involved;
  - Outlining those critical factors, identified by the *Different Futures* research, which facilitate women's entry to non-traditional trades;
  - Advising women and girls interested in non-traditional trade careers on how to secure employment.

- State education authorities establish and co-ordinate a central register of employers willing to offer girls work experience. That project officers be employed to administer and promote the register and provide advice to employers about establishing work experience programs for girls;
- Future subject curricula, particularly maths and science, be developed that incorporate career and non-career examples of that subject's potential applications to students in adult life;
- Formal careers education include information about occupational segregation and the changing demographics of the workforce, including statistically demonstrating to women and girls the likelihood they will stay in the workforce for a large part of their adult life, and that this education begin in Year 7.

Industry

It is recommended that:

- Given that governments fund Industry Training Advisory Bodies inclusive of equity strategies, that ITABs be accountable for establishing equal opportunity guidelines for their industries. With respect to marketing promotions, these guidelines should:
  - Ensure the industry accurately presents the changing nature of trade employment; and
  - Present the industry in a way that will appeal to the job value of women and other critical factors identified by this research.

- A pilot project be established to develop a mainstream marketing plan for a large employer's trade entry level recruitment drive, which focuses on the interpersonal skills required for trade work. That this plan:
  - Specifically aim to increase the applications of women in a mainstream trade entry level recruitment drive, by emphasising those aspects of trade work that most appeal to women;
  - Be developed in conjunction with a large employer or employer organisation;
  - Be piloted by a large employer during their recruitment drive;
  - Be evaluated with specific recommendations directed to small, medium and large employers.

- On a State basis, employer bodies be requested to co-ordinate registers of employers seeking apprentices and to administer and promote the register to employers, women and women's networks;

- Employer organisations and industry bodies be requested to actively promote the *Different Futures* employer recruitment package to their members through marketing, distribution and the provision of related training programs.

Trade Unions

It is recommended that:

- Peak bodies such as the ACTU and State Trades and Labour Councils continue to encourage affiliates with coverage of occupations and industries which provide non-traditional entry-level training and employment opportunities for women to:
  - Develop, implement and monitor affirmative action policies through participatory and consultative processes within the representative structures of the union;
  - Actively ensure that award variations and enterprise agreements negotiated and implemented under the Structural Efficiency Principle and the Enterprise Bargaining Arrangements as expounded by the Australian Industrial Relations Commission, promote equal opportunity for women entering and working in trade based areas through the removal of direct and indirect discriminatory clauses and work practices;
  - Ensure that all external and internal trade union training which targets officials, shop stewards and job delegates, health and safety representatives and rank and file members has components which:

Address and explain the effects of gender segregation in the Australian workforce;
Address and explain equal opportunity and affirmative action principles, practices and strategies and the importance of these to women in non-traditional entry-level training; and
addresses and explains the effects of inappropriate workplace behaviour such as sex-based harassment.

- Ensure that all union publications including new member's kits, induction kits and training packages inform women members of equal opportunity and industrial rights which have a special significance to them as women, e.g. maternity leave and sex-based harassment.

The executive summary of the report lists the major findings under four headings: what women want from work: how women learn about work; what women and career educators need to know; and; what employers need to know.

The major findings are summarised below:

What women want from work

- Women value work that provides them with opportunities to develop career paths, attain financial independence, work on their own initiative; (work that is) is people-oriented and involves team work;
- In the main, women choose occupations based on their attraction to specific aspects and tasks involved. They are also engaging in further training related to their occupations over and above their formal entry level training, suggesting women have strong levels of commitment to their careers;
- Providing women with access to trade subjects and non-traditional work experience at school is a critical factor in facilitating their entry to non-traditional trades.

How women learn about work

- Gender targeting strategies and campaigns at community, school TAFE and employer level are effective in attracting women to consider non-traditional occupations. Employment promotions which focus on the fact that non-traditional trades offer career prospects and people-oriented work will also increase women's interest;
- Women need information about the specific aspects of trade work and this information is best presented by giving women access to talk to, observe and work with people doing the work. Careers educators are generally not promoting non-traditional career options to girls. The media has a powerful influence on providing women with information about traditional occupations, yet has a negligible effect in informing women about non-traditional occupations.

What women and career educators need to know

- Women need access to information regarding employer expectations of them during the recruitment process and general information about how to find work in non-traditional entry-level training;

- 'Women don't apply' is the most common reason given by employers to explain why they have never employed female apprentices. Employers rate technical ability, communication skills, willingness to learn, problem solving skills and the ability to work in a team as highly important qualities for potential apprentices, and physical strength and mathematical ability as qualities necessary for potential apprentices;
- Women in non-traditional trades regard mathematics as the subject most useful to their occupation. Women in traditional occupations also regard mathematics highly, which highlights a need to further broad-based programs to encourage women to study mathematics.

What employers need to know

- Advertising in newspapers is the recruitment method most likely to attract applications from women. Word-of-mouth is the most common recruitment method used by employers; if informal women's networks were incorporated into employers' existing word-of-mouth networks, women's access would increase;
- Organisations that have previously employed female apprentices are more likely to receive applications from women, and employers who have implemented or supported strategies to attract applications from women have succeeded in doing so;
- Women are more likely to be employed by employers who have used personnel professionals and aptitude tests in the selection process, but the diverse methods of test usage and analysis prevent a conclusive statement regarding their impact on improving women's access;
- Many employers' interview questions reinforce direct and indirect discrimination by basing answers on male normative behaviours; few employers systematically correlate interview questions to selection criteria.

The project brief was considerably expanded during the initial stages of the project. A formal research design defining the parameters of the project, objectives and methodology was developed and informed by a literature review. Subsequently, the following objectives were developed:

- To conduct an action research project to determine the factors that facilitate women's access to non-traditional entry-level training by:

    - Investigating the sources of influence in determining occupational choices for women; and
    - Investigating the recruitment strategies of employers of women in non-traditional trades.

- To produce a recruitment package for employers, based on the findings into practical strategies likely to attract female applicants for non-traditional trades.

Eliminating Gender Bias in the Development of National Competency Standards, an Addendum to National Competency Standards Policy and Guidelines

Publication Details

National Training Board, 1991, *Eliminating Gender Bias in the Development of National Competency Standards, an Addendum to National Competency Standards Policy and Guidelines*, National Training Board, Canberra.

Synopsis

This document outlines the National Training Board's (NTB) policy and guidelines specifically on gender issues, and provides checklists and practical suggestions on how to eliminate gender bias in the development of competency standards. It is designed to be read and interpreted in conjunction with the NTB *National Competency Standards: Policy and Guidelines* and was to be consolidated into the next edition of that document.

Does the report have an implementation/program or research/policy focus?

The document has an implementation focus.

Key concerns of the report

The document states that in order to facilitate the achievement of gender equity in competency standards development, the National Training Board has determined a number of principles under the following subheadings: representation in the standards development process; language; methods of analysis; and, identification of competencies.

The main concerns are identical to the recommendations contained in Section 3.

Key findings/recommendations

The National Training Board recommends that:

- Those involved in conducting a competency analysis are knowledgeable about, and sensitive to, the issues of gender bias;
- All required competencies, not just task skills, are identified during the analysis;
- The identification of technical skill goes beyond only those which are machine or equipment-related and includes, where relevant, caring (e.g. the correct lifting of a patient), manual dexterity; accounting and analytical skills etc.;
- The analysis reflect the context and level of responsibility in which a particular competency is carried out; and
- The analysis include identifying those competencies which tend to be overlooked or omitted.

Guidelines and Principles of Gender Equity in the Development of Industry Training Plans

Publication Details

Vocational Education, Employment and Training Advisory Committee, 1993, *Guidelines and Principles of Gender Equity in the Development of Industry Training Plans,* VEETAC, Canberra.

Synopsis

The guidelines are a working document developed by the Vocational Education and Training Advisory Committee Women's Standing Committee to assist Industry Training Advisory Bodies to identify and address gender equity issues in the development of industry training plans.

The guidelines have been based on the principles of equity; access, equality, participation and efficiency. A checklist of guidelines and possible strategies has been included. It is divided into two areas, consultation and decision making and gender equity in training plans. It focuses on suggestions to improve processes which will be likely to produce equity outcomes.

Does the report have an implementation/program or research/policy focus?

The document has an implementation focus.

Key concerns of the report

The report documents that national reviews have identified two major factors relating to women's skill levels and their participation in the labour force:

- There is a gap between the skill levels of employed women and those of men; and
- Women's participation in occupations and industries is restricted to a narrow range of options.

The productivity and effectiveness of the Australian workforce are affected by both of these factors and, by reviewing personnel practices, identifying skills gaps and providing training opportunities, the potential of women in the workforce will be realised.

Key findings/recommendations

A checklist of guidelines and possible strategies, rather than recommendations, has been included in the document.

Checklist questions are detailed below.

Consultation and Decision Making

- Does your industry have women represented in its consultative and decision making forums?
- Have mechanisms been established to ensure issues affecting women in your industry are adequately represented?

Gender Equity in Training Plans

- Has an industry profile been developed?
- Have the factors been identified which account for gender concentration in particular industry sectors, occupations, firms and at different job levels in your industry?
- Has women's access to, and participation in, both accredited and non-accredited training been examined?
- Does your industry training plan take into account access and equity issues relating to skill formation?
- In determining future skills needs of the industry, has attention been given to the training needs of those who currently work at lower skill levels?
- Have all the employment-related skills of women been recognised and valued appropriately?
- Does the proposed training plan provide an appropriate response to the identified training needs of women?

The focus of the guidelines is to achieve identifiable outcomes for women in education, employment and training. Some of the outcomes for women will include:

- Achievement of key areas of competence as identified in the reports entitled *Young People's Participation in Post Compulsory Education and Training* (Finn Report, 1991); *Employment Related Key Competencies: A Proposal for Consultation* (Mayer Report, 1992); and *The Australian Vocational Certificate System* (Carmichael Report, 1992);
- Achievement of vocational competencies and career enhancement through pathways providing access to training opportunities which provide for recognition of prior learning, accreditation and articulation and credit transfer to higher levels of competence;
- More equal participation by women in training (including entry-level training) across the range of industries, occupations and education and training sectors.

Swings And Roundabouts: The Open Training Market And Women's Participation In TAFE: A Discussion Paper Publication Details

Barnett, K. 1993, *Swings And Roundabouts: The Open Training Market and Women's Participation in TAFE: A Discussion Paper*, National Centre for Vocational Education Research Ltd., Adelaide.

Synopsis

The report examines the likely impact of an open training market on women's participation in TAFE. The first section of the report examines the key features of an open training market, as well as central components of training reform initiatives and the origins of both. The second section gives an overview of women's current participation on TAFE in terms of patterns of participation and barriers to participation. The final section draws conclusions about the likely effects of an open training market on women's participation by relating current patterns to the components of an open training market.

The project was designed to span two years and to be separated into two phases. The report concerns Phase One of the project, which involves analysing the likely implications of the new training market on women's participation in TAFE. Phase Two is intended to analyse the likely impact of fees and charges on women. The limitations of the project include a lack of quantitative analysis of the situation of women from non-English speaking backgrounds, Aboriginal women, sole parents and women in remote or isolated locations. Consequently, the report only discusses the situation of special needs groups on the basis of the knowledge of individuals with direct understanding and/or contact with those groups of women. The report stresses that Australia is likely to develop a vocational education system which is two-tiered and segmented, with the public provision being oriented to the needs of groups disadvantaged by the open training market and the private provision targeting the non-disadvantaged consumer, unless private providers are influenced and supported by government equity initiatives.

Does the report have an implementation/program or research/policy focus?

The report has a research focus.

Key concerns of the report

- The need to maintain access and equity as a linchpin, rather than as an unnecessary cost, is one of the central concerns in the move towards an open training market;
- The need for governments to introduce initiatives which will motivate private providers to address access and equity issues is emphasised in the report. An open training market will mean that participation in vocational education and training will become a privilege rather than a right without such intervention;
- Women face a number of barriers which hinder their participation in the current vocational education system and, relative to men, this participation is characterised by a number of inequities. With the movement of the present system towards an open training market by allowing competition between public and private providers, the question is raised as to whether inequities will be even further entrenched or whether this direction will provide opportunities to enhance equity;
- The conclusion of the report states that, in order to prevent women's position in vocational education deteriorating even further, the barriers characterising our vocational education system must be addressed. It will be more difficult to achieve this in a diversified, open training market if the problems in the current publicly funded and controlled environment are considered.

Key findings/recommendations

There were no specific recommendations made. However, a strong statement is made regarding the introduction of access and equity-oriented incentives by governments for both TAFE and non-TAFE providers.

The report advises that the pursuit of access and equity cannot be left to non-interventionist processes and that specific interventions will be necessary, representing specific responses to the special needs of the specific disadvantaged groups in question. In order to achieve equity outcomes the following factors must be considered:

- Identification of the special needs of industry and women;
- The planning of strategies which can address the needs of consumers with special needs;
- Strategic analysis of the training and labour market;
- Negotiated targeting;
- Additional and targeted resources;
- Flexibility in the application and adjustment of access/equity initiatives;
- A high level of commitment to access and equity.

Access and equity oriented incentives for both TAFE and non-TAFE providers are most likely to be effective if linked to:

- Accreditation and funding of courses;
- If training purchasers stipulate that training provisions must focus not only on courses, but on the factors influencing accessibility to those courses;
- Governments also need to provide support in the form of information and advice to providers to assist them in addressing access and equity issues.

The Position of Women in the National Training Reform Agenda And Enterprise Bargaining: A Discussion Paper

Publication Details

Smith, M. & Ewer, P. Women's Bureau, DEET, 1995, *The Position of Women in the National Training Reform Agenda and Enterprise Bargaining: A Discussion Paper*, AGPS, Canberra.

Synopsis

This report presents the findings of a research project into the position of women in the national training reform agenda and enterprise bargaining. It was funded by the Women's Research and Employment Initiatives Program (WREIP). The report was based on a quantitative analysis of 1029 (Federally registered) enterprise bargaining agreements certified by the Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC) between May 1991 and July 1993. The report details a range of workplace changes likely to affect the capacity of women in the labour force to participate in training opportunities, and investigates the importance attached to training issues in the bargaining process. It canvasses a wide range of issues associated with training at the workplace and the complex interaction of these on working women's lives.

Does the report have an implementation/program or research/policy focus?

The report primarily has a research focus.

Key concerns of the report

Priority areas for action
The authors state that possibly the most important implication arising from this research is that the pattern of workplace change is unlikely to alter the shape of the demand for training as education markets develop. This suggests that women and other disadvantaged groups in the labour markets will not gain the publicised benefits from the National Training Reform Agenda. In order to correct this situation, policy responses across a number of areas are required. Thus, the recommendations could be seen as priority areas for action.

Further Research
The authors declare that the findings of the research are an interpretation of bargaining documents and must remain tentative. Further investigation is needed to ascertain if the agreements reflect reality in the workplace. Future research might comprise two streams:

- The maintenance of an ongoing database to monitor enterprise bargaining, where possible integrated with affirmative action reports to provide occupational profiles by gender; and
- Field work to widen the research beyond an analysis of the agreements, to assess the actual implementation of change at the workplace.

It could also include attitudinal surveys to gauge the perceptions of women on the extent to which workplace change is affecting their career opportunities.

Key findings/recommendations

- **Recommendation 1:** As implementation of the Australian Vocational Certificate system proceeds; the Australian National Training Authority, the National Training Board and other relevant authorities should monitor the pathways taken by women, with a view to ensuring equitable participation in the new training arrangements.
- **Recommendation 2:** In the event that an enterprise stream is included in arrangements for the Australian Vocational Certificate, the Australian National Training Authority, the National Training Board, and other relevant authorities should examine ways in which such training can be articulated with industry-wide qualifications and credentials.
- **Recommendation 3:** Employers and unions should, in the development of training plans and the negotiation of enterprise agreements, explicitly address how training has been designed to meet the needs of workers with family responsibilities. An examination of these issues would include, inter alia, scheduling of class times, provision of child care and the introduction of family leave.
- **Recommendation 4:** Employers and unions should consider how the training entitlements of casual and part time workers can be advanced through enterprise bargaining, including via the provision of pro rata entitlements.
- **Recommendation 5:** The parties involved in the industrial relations process - governments, trade unions and the Australian Industrial Relations Commission - should consider whether the application of the existing 'no disadvantage' test adequately protects the interests of working women. The Working Women's Centres currently being established, and women's groups more generally should pursue the issue of indirect discrimination in the context of the 'no disadvantage' test.
- **Recommendation 6:** [There was no recommendation 6 in the document. The section immediately following Recommendation 5 included suggestions for further research (which are included in Section 6), but no specific recommendation was made.]
- **Recommendation 7:** Researchers in the area of enterprise bargaining should widen their field of inquiry regarding the effects of enterprise bargaining, to include not just issues of wage equity, but also the nature and effect of workplace changes on women, particularly in relation to numerical and time flexibilities.
- **Recommendation 8:** The Affirmative Action Agency should consider changes to its reporting requirements, to include the impact of enterprise bargaining on women, and how women's interests were considered in the design and implementation of workplace changes likely to affect their career opportunities.

The report, drawing on a literature review and research, finds that:

- In the training arena, if women are to benefit from the reform process, certain principles are required:
    - Gender-inclusive design of such things as competency standards, skill audits and curricula;
    - Measures to facilitate women's entry into non-traditional training and occupations; and

    - Monitoring of the education market to ensure that women receive equitable access to the available training resources.

- In enterprise bargaining, similar measures include:

    - Amendments to orthodox notions of productivity, so that affirmative action measures and the like are properly conceived of as 'productive';
    - Safeguards to the extension of time flexibilities, to prevent these from further entrenching discrimination at the workplace.

The findings of the database show that training figures prominently in enterprise bargaining, 640 out of 1029, made some reference to training initiatives and, 263 contained a commitment to a detailed training plan. Unfortunately other workplace changes are likely to greatly influence working women's lives. For example, 329 of the 1029 agreements involved flexibility in the actual ordinary hours of work, and 151 provided for changes in the length of shifts. These time flexibilities appear to have been negotiated without reference to the family responsibilities of workers and only 14 agreements addressed this issue. The use of numeric flexibilities reveals a similar trend. 213 of the agreements provided for the employment of casual or temporary labour and only 8 contained pro-rata access to training for casuals.

The analysis of agreements reached by 13 organisations suggests that, although a small number of firms have used enterprise bargaining to promote equity issues, in some cases the affirmative action initiatives claimed by enterprises are at odds with the workplace changes revealed by enterprise bargaining agreements.

Thus far, enterprise bargaining has shown little indication that it will assist women to influence the pattern of training demand, and there is little likelihood that women will benefit from the development of training plans unless greater attention is paid in the bargaining process to issues relevant to women. What is needed is a shift to a new, equity-based conception of productivity enhancement. Legislative mechanisms such as the Sex Discrimination Act to protect their interests in the absence of cultural realignment may be an option.

The authors claim that their research has barely scratched the surface of the issues that need investigating and monitoring under an enterprise bargaining system. Participation in this monitoring will need to be reviewed by a number of bodies. The Affirmative Action Agency among others will need to assess how the accelerating changes at the workplace need to be evaluated.

During the study, the researchers chose to avoid comparing the parent award and the enterprise bargaining agreement, mainly because it fell outside the parameters of the study (which were to quantify the importance of training and other issues relevant to women in the bargaining process). The authors note that this clearly restricts the scope as the database measures the *content* of the latter. Where the effect of any given workplace change was unclear, the matter was coded as ‘not known’.

REPORT SUMMARIES

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS

Research Priorities in Vocational Education and Training - A Discussion

Publication Details

Elkins, J. 1994, 'Priorities for Special Groups', and 'The Needs of Special Groups', McNamara, N.& Valadian, M. 1994, in 'Research Priorities in Vocational Education and Training - a Discussion', papers presented to a conference hosted by ANTA Research Advisory Council in Sydney, April 1994, NCVER/ANTA, Brisbane.

Synopsis

Elkins provides a general discussion of 'special groups' and their educational needs. He discusses theories of how disadvantaged adults may learn, and a range of related issues. He gives particular attention to the school, training, work transition and the concept of inclusion (the provision of access to education in the mainstream), and makes a number of recommendations about further evaluation and research.

McNamara and Valadian address the needs of 'special groups' as they apply to Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders and make a number of suggestions for the research agenda.

Does the report have a research/policy focus or an implementation/program focus?

The report has a research focus.

Key concerns of the report

The report is concerned with research priorities for ANTA in regard to people with special needs, particularly focussing on people with disabilities and Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders.

Key findings/recommendations

There are no specific recommendations. Conclusions and suggestions are summarised as follows:

- There may be as much variability between learners with a similar 'category' of difference (e.g. special needs, disadvantaged; or women Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders) as there is between groups;
- There has been variable success of the education and training systems in the past in dealing with special needs; part of the reason is undoubtedly the high costs associated with such initiatives (e.g. resource costs, teacher/trainer attitude change);

- The importance of the concept of 'inclusion' or mainstreaming. Perhaps the focus should/could shift, from the needs of groups who are disadvantaged with respect to other Australians to the needs of groups who are disadvantaged by the language, culture and mode of delivery and teaching methods - i.e. That mainstreaming is less about 'fitting in' learners from identified groups, and much more about making the mainstream equitable and valuable for all. For instance, many Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders carry the fear that 'mainstream' is in part the result of the inability of the educational institutions to change their services, and believe that indigenous-specific programs, courses and institutions are the only salvation for the people;
- The value of the concept of lifelong learning or education, as opposed to simply training for a job or career path;
- Lack of a clear picture as to the extent of involvement in VET of those disadvantaged or with special needs. What is the VET system's return on investment, not just measured in terms of numbers in training, or outcomes in employment (e.g. What is the overall allocation of resources to VET for Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders, the number of trainers, and the number of Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders receiving training)?
- Insufficient use of information technology and/or open learning methodologies; and
- The need for a 'seamless web' between schooling and vocational education and training.

Gaps and priority areas for research were identified as:

- Research to develop a clear picture of the extent of involvement in VET by those identified as belonging to disadvantaged groups;
- Research to identify what those in disadvantaged groups think about their needs (to avoid providing unnecessary help, and identify gaps which might otherwise be overlooked);
- Research to improve the total system of training, focused not only on the access of a particular group but on the total systemic changes which are required to implement the ideals of equality and accommodate the groups within the existing training sector without the need for systems within systems; and
- Research needs to be action-oriented and collaborative across the artificial boundaries of academic endeavour (e.g. TAFE systems and universities).

Aboriginal Education and Training into the 21st Century', Selected and Edited Papers Presented at the National TAFE Senior Executives' Conference

Publication Details

Lester, J. 1994, 'Aboriginal Education and Training into the 21st Century', *Selected and Edited Papers Presented at the National TAFE Senior Executives' Conference*, Kooralbyn, 7 - 8 October 1993, NCVER, South Australia.

Synopsis

The key issues for Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders in VET are considered in this paper including the Australian Vocational Certificate System, TAFE pathways and enrolments, the needs of mature age students, competency based training, the implications of the Mabo decision, isolation and Aboriginal vocational studies.

Does the report have a research/policy focus or an implementation/program focus?

The report has an implementation/program focus.

Key concerns of the report

The key concern of this paper is the achievement of outcomes in the VET system for Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders through the active development and promotion of comprehensive strategies 'which will guarantee Aboriginal people their rightful and equitable share in the vocational opportunities of Australia's economic growth.'

Key findings/recommendations

The paper does not contain recommendations as such, but suggests the following:

- Aboriginal people need to be involved in decision-making on improving the educational and training opportunities not only for Aborigines, but for the community as a whole;
- New NSW TAFE programs for 16-19 year olds which will provide access to HSC through direct vocational study in TAFE must by accompanied by:
  - An affirmative action program instituted from day one, otherwise Aboriginal people will once again have been marginalised;
  - The NSW Board of Senior Studies should not control the accreditation of the HSC through TAFE pathways, as the likely outcome is curricula and vocational offerings too far removed from the needs and interests of the age group;
  - TAFE pathways should not be driven by a TER score. 'We need to look after the 80 odd percent of students who do not wish to go, or, will not qualify to go on to university study directly from Year 12.
- The tertiary preparatory courses for mature-age students must continue at all costs, as they represent the most successful and powerful tool in empowering students (and even whole communities), and assist in raising the level of Aboriginal basic education. They must however be intrinsically linked to vocational outcomes, and contain Aboriginal Studies as an integral part of any course design;
- Competency based training, flexible methodologies (e.g. external studies), and self-paced modes of delivery are desirable methods of adult teaching and learning, but continued effort and strategies need to be devoted to the issue of literacy in Aboriginal communities for these to be of real value;
- TAFE has a major responsibility to ensure that an understanding of, and background to, Aboriginal culture and traditions is made available to all students, to ensure that the reconciliation process continues;
- TAFE is well-placed to overcome the isolation of many in remote/rural communities, and some suggested strategies include:
  - Stream 1000 courses allow Aboriginal people to control the type and nature of training offered in their communities, and thus build the necessary level of trust in, and commitment to, the VET system as a whole;
  - Development of Aboriginal teacher training facilitators would enable communities to continue to have control over, and input into, the training offered and accessed;

- The use of new technologies, the modularisation of VET, recognition of prior learning and competency based training - all offer great potential to ensure that training is flexible, suited to the needs of the learner, and that credit is gained for any training undertaken.

- Management and entrepreneurial management training is an urgent requirement for many Aboriginal communities;
- A National Diploma in Aboriginal Vocational Studies, with a variety of exit points (e.g. Certificate, Diploma, Advanced Diploma); with a core of Aboriginal studies and a minimum of two majors of vocational options (e.g. health, welfare) is proposed; entrance would be via a variety of options, the program would fully articulate in other TAFE and tertiary programs, and it should be fully supported by external studies options.

Australian Vocational Certificate Training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

Publication Details

National Board of Employment Education and Training, 1993, Employment and Skills Formation Council, *Australian Vocational Certificate Training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People*, DEET, Canberra.

Synopsis

This report addresses the Employment and Skills Formation Council recommendation, in its report on the Australian Vocational Certificate Training System (AVCTS), that a staged program be developed to ensure equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in rates and levels of participation in a vocational certificate training system by 2001.

Does the report have a research/policy focus or an implementation/program focus?

The report has an implementation/program focus.

Key concerns of the report

The report found that in addition to existing projects, pilot AVCTS projects were needed to specifically focus on the needs, societal and cultural values and attitudes of Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders, and that to effectively achieve such projects they should be initiated and managed by, and targeted at Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders. They should also provide training and skills which are of value to, and are valued by, the community, and also enhance mobility if desired.

Key recommendations.

- DEET should implement 4-6 AVCTS pilots in Aboriginal communities;
- Resources should be allocated for the necessary intensive discussions with the communities involved; plans should be drawn up by the communities, and it must be ensured that there is a balance between a sound knowledge and understanding of the societal and cultural values and attitudes of Aboriginal people and a sound knowledge and understanding of the training reform agenda and the AVCTS;

- Appropriate DEET officers in conjunction with Aboriginal officers in the States have responsibility for recommending communities to be involved and for initiating consultation with the communities on the implementation of the pilots;
- Preparation for the pilots would require identification of skill needs which should include recognition of traditional skills and methods of learning;
- Communities could be asked to identify a priority list of skills for training for about 20 persons in each case, who would make a commitment to their community to undertake and complete their training;
- The training must be associated with actual work experience and lead to employment and/or economic independence for the participants;
- Key competencies need to be 'built into' the training program to take account of early school leaving where necessary;
- Ongoing commitment needs to be gained from the providers in the States and Territories so that the process, once started, would continue;
- The Council (ESFC) recognised that there were VET requirements that went beyond the AVCTS, such as effective training in management, accounting, and trainer training (e.g. for community council presidents, secretaries and human resource training officers).

National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples: Final Report

Publication Details

National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples: Final Report, 1994, AGPS, Canberra.

Synopsis

The document is the final report of a broadly-based reference group overseeing a national review of education for Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders. The Review examines what has happened up to the present and assesses what has and has not worked in education for Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders. It also looks forward and suggests ways to improve how things are done, and new action to further improve Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders' experience of education.

Does the report have a research/policy focus or an implementation/program focus?

The report has an implementation/program focus.

Key concerns of the report

Key concerns of the review were:

- Broad consultation at the grass roots level;
- A review of the past to assess what has and has not worked in education for Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders; and suggest ways to improve how things are done, and Aboriginal Peoples' and Torres Strait Islanders' experience of education;
- The two principal themes that emerged from the Review were - equity and reconciliation.

Key findings/recommendations

The educational experience of Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders has improved in the last five years, however inequity of opportunity and outcomes for Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders remain. The submissions to the Review on the subject of equity generally took one of three main views:

- That equity is interpreted solely or primarily in terms of the outcomes of 'mainstream' education in Australia and assumes that these goals and outcomes are self-evidently desirable;
- That educational inequality suffered by indigenous peoples is not merely individual but related to cultural differences; that greater equity can be achieved if educational processes are conducted with greater cultural awareness and sensitivity;
- That in addition to greater cultural awareness and sensitivity, educational outcomes for Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders students can only be equitable if there is a recognition that different outcomes are appropriate;
- Services must be culturally appropriate and provide Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders with the opportunity to negotiate, manage and provide their own services;
- 'Cultural integrity and heritage programs' are important for increasing awareness of indigenous cultures and spirituality in the education system and in the community generally.

Specific recommendations are summarised as follows:

- That all Australian governments reaffirm their commitment to the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy;
- That the work of all bodies developing policy and/or providing educational programs and services which have an impact on Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders be based on the following principles:
    - Self-determination in education putting the authority to make decisions in the hands of Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders; e.g. developing arrangements for the allocation, distribution and management of resources which permit the direct funding of Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders incorporated bodies so that they may, as they deem appropriate, independently provide education and training services for Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders, contract with other bodies for the provision of education services, and/or otherwise assist in empowering access and participation in education;
    - Diversity - empowering Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders to exercise the maximum degree of choice in education;
    - Subsidiarity - shifting responsibility for, and about, education for
    - Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders as far 'down' administrative systems as possible, given the demands of accountability and the efficient delivery of services;
    - Affiliation - ensuring coordination between groups as far 'up' the administrative system as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities wish, to pursue shared aims and to achieve economies of scale; and
    - Efficiency - of the available resources, minimising the amount of money spent on administration and maximising the amount of money spent on actually providing education services for Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders.

The report also recommends an extensive consultation process into the key question:

> 'Can public education resources be applied differently to ensure indigenous peoples have the opportunity both to achieve equitable outcomes and satisfy a right to have education delivered in more culturally appropriate ways?'

Ara Kuwaritjakutu Project - Towards a New Way: An Investigation into the Working Conditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Workers

Publication Details:

Buckskin, P. & Hignett B. 1994, *Ara Kuwaritjakutu Project - Towards a New Way: An Investigation into the Working Conditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Workers,* Christine Davis (ed.).

Synopsis

The profile of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workers has changed markedly in the last twenty years. Some now have 20 plus years of experience to draw upon. Many now have tertiary qualifications. A small percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workers are in the middle ranks of the bureaucracy involved in administrative and managerial tasks. Since the adoption of the Aboriginal Education Policy (AEP) the tasks of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workers have become even more complex. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workers are moving towards a new definition of the para-professional within education, yet many are still employed in temporary positions with no guaranteed funding to protect employment and salary scales which take little account of the demands of the job. Training opportunities are piecemeal and there are still no career structures. These and other issues are explored in the report.

Does the report have a research/policy focus or an implementation/program focus?

The report has an implementation/program focus

Key concerns of the report

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workers are a significant occupational group in the education industry and various reports have documented their contribution to the education of Aboriginal students;
- There is a very high turn-over of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workers as their working conditions are fraught with problems related to confusion about roles, under-recognition of the various skills they hold and use, low salaries, poor access to permanent employment (and related entitlements), institutionalised racism, exploitation, no career path, and few appropriate training/further education opportunities.

Key findings/recommendations

- That the Report be widely distributed to all involved in employment, education, Aboriginal agencies, groups and communities, unions, etc.;

- That a national framework for the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workers be developed (initiated by the Commonwealth) to ensure the provision of appropriate and adequate working conditions;
- That the Commonwealth Government ensure that the States/Territories meet the appropriate standards of employment;
- That the Commonwealth Government fund a further stage of the project to identify the skills and competencies expected of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workers, and the appropriate training/accredited programs which can be developed to meet those skill and competency requirements;
- That all relevant employers and unions commence negotiations immediately for the development of a national award or enterprise agreement to meet the identified skill and salary levels, entry points, career paths, support, working conditions, etc. of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workers;
- That employers maintain adequate personnel records on a data base for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workers' employment;
- That the Commonwealth initiate action to develop an appropriate national course for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workers;
- That ANTA examine ways in which the TAFE sector can become more accessible to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workers.

Proposed Social Justice Policy for the Vocational Education, Training and Employment System: Discussion Paper

Publication Details

Proposed Social Justice Policy for the Vocational Education, Training and Employment System: Discussion Paper, 1993, Queensland VETE Commission.

Synopsis

The overall focus of the paper is the development of a general social justice/equity strategy for VET and employment in Queensland; however, it does address issues related to each of the identified disadvantaged groups, and makes recommendations for each. Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders are one such group.

Does the report have a research/policy focus or an implementation/program focus?

The report has a policy focus.

Key concerns

The discussion paper summarises the current situation for Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders:

- Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders represent 2.5% of the Queensland population;

- Only 1 in 10 Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders aged 15 years and over has post-school educational qualifications, compared with 1 in 3 of the total population; and although Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander participation in all levels of education has increased in the last two decades, it is still lower than that of the total population (e.g. in 1991 mainstream TAFE courses, Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander students constituted only 1.8%). The Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander population also has higher rates of truancy. Inadequate levels of literacy are common among Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander communities;
- At the 1986 Census, Aboriginal people had a labour force participation rate of 51%; Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander women had a workforce participation rate of 38% (compared to 56% for non-Aboriginal women). The Census also revealed that 35% of Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders were unemployed (compared to the national average of 9%); and the Queensland unemployment rate was estimated to be more than 3 times the general rate (unemployment rate is inversely proportional to the level of qualifications held);
- Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders also tend to be employed in a mixture of low-skilled industries and occupations.

Key findings/recommendations

- At governmental level nationally, the key themes are the empowerment of Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders and communities and encouraging self-determination of individuals and their communities; Queensland has established an inter-departmental committee to further examine these issues and set priorities for implementation;
- The needs of isolated communities should be considered in terms of what the communities can contribute to the design and delivery of training programs and services;
- Strategies should be developed to teach self-management skills, to encourage self-management and direction of the communities;
- Alternative learning modes should be implemented to capitalise on the different learning styles of the Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders;
- A negotiated target strategy should be considered, aimed at increasing Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander participation in access courses to mainstream courses; an overall representation of 2.5% is suggested, but in areas (such as Cairns) where the local population ratio is higher, then the targets should be adjusted accordingly;
- One strategy already in place is the Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders Council on VETE, providing advice to VETEC on VET and employment strategic policies which have an impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

REPORT SUMMARIES

PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

An Enabling Vision: Open Learning and Students with a Disability

Publication Details

Dundas, P. Open Learning Technology Corporation, 1994, *An Enabling Vision: Open Learning and Students with a Disability*, Open Learning Technology Corporation, Adelaide.

Synopsis

The report is the result of a study by Peter Kearns and Associates which was commissioned by DEET to evaluate the potential of open learning and flexible delivery to improve access to education and training for students with a disability. The study included a search of Australian and international literature on open learning and students with a disability, an evaluation of current policies within education and training institutions and a review of existing support services and facilities for both on-campus and off-campus students. Nine institutions from across Australia in the higher education, TAFE and school sectors were selected for in-depth study to illustrate best practice.

Does the report have an implementation/program or research/policy focus?

The report adds to the small body of open learning literature which focuses on the benefits of open learning for people with a disability, by providing both an overview of the issues and a basis for further discussion and research.

Key concerns of the report

Recent training reform initiatives and legislative changes in Australia raise equity issues for people with disabilities in regard to access to education and training. Equity policy requirements oblige higher education and tertiary institutions to devise and implement equity objectives.

The study sets out to establish how responsive higher education and tertiary institutions have been to these equity requirements in relation to students with a disability, where best practice is occurring, and what further strategies can be adopted to improve access and equity for students with disabilities in education and training.

The main conclusion is that open learning and flexible delivery have substantial potential to improve access to education and training by people with a disability.

Key findings/recommendations

Key findings include:

- Participation of students with a disability remains low in all sectors of post-compulsory education and training because of four main barriers to access. These barriers are physical, attitudinal, financial and learning;
- The case studies show that institutions in all sectors have become more responsive to the individual needs of students with a disability;
- A range of strategies has been adopted, with varying results, but significant barriers remain to be addressed;
- There have been some significant innovations in the TAFE sector with the development of several open learning/flexible delivery colleges and with the development of the Open Training and Education Network (OTEN) in NSW.

The recommendations of the Kearns study focus on action which will contribute to the development of national strategies to foster open learning for students with a disability in all sectors of education and training. These are summarised as follows:

- Relevant research centres should strengthen research and development on the uses of open learning and flexible delivery methods for the education of students with a disability in all sectors including:

  - Establishing research priorities in this area; and
  - Developing arrangements for the effective dissemination of information on research findings to all interested parties.

- A volume of international case studies should be prepared;
- Information materials should be prepared in user friendly and accessible form;
- This report of the study should be used as a basis for seminars aimed at encouraging educational institutions to review their policies towards students with a disability, and to develop open learning and flexible delivery options for these students;
- All sectors of education should give priority to staff development programs which address attitudinal barriers which impede participation by students with a disability and the development of high quality materials in open learning formats for use in staff development programs should be promoted;
- The Open Learning Technology Corporation should actively promote the development of networks so as to pool technological expertise and should establish on-going relationships with relevant agencies in other countries concerned with the use of modern learning technologies;
- Institutions in all sectors should be encouraged and supported to monitor and review on an on-going basis, their responsiveness to the learning and developmental needs of all students; and
- MCEETYA should approve a three-year National Development Program to operate over 1995-1997, directed at promoting the use of open learning and flexible delivery methods.

Vocational Education Needs Within TAFE of People with a Physical or a Sensory Disability

Publication details

Meadows, D. & Tronc, K. 1990, *Vocational Education Needs Within TAFE of People with a Physical or a Sensory Disability*, (with a chapter on legal issues), TAFE National Centre for Research and Development, Leabrook, SA.

Synopsis

The aims of the study were to summarise the special provisions available for the particular needs of people with disabilities, especially concerning their integration within normal classes and their future employment, to summarise the legal aspects of teaching people with disabilities, and to identify major issues for research needed into vocational education needs of persons with disabilities.

The focus of the study was on the participation and the needs of persons with a sensory or a physical disability in mainstream TAFE vocational courses and not on special programs for persons with an additional disability. The study sought the views of providers and disabled recipients of TAFE mainstream courses.

Does the report have an implementation/program or research/policy focus?

The report has a research focus.

Key concerns of the report

The study examined the then current (1989/90) special provisions within TAFE for students with a physical/sensory disability with particular reference to their integration within 'normal' classes and their future employment. The special provisions included:

- Curricula and the management of the curricula;
- Design of facilities;
- Provision of counselling;
- TAFE lecturer in-service development.

Key findings/recommendations

Note: Legal issues have not been considered.

Findings in this report were separated into four groups: TAFE; groups representing persons with a hearing impairment; groups representing persons with a visual impairment; and groups representing persons with a physical disability.

Most of the findings were common across the four groups and are summarised below:

- There was a need to develop a policy on the provision of TAFE services to students with a disability;

- There was a need for a formalised set of strategies designed to ensure that the requirements of students with disabilities were met;
- There was no centralised system in TAFE for collecting data on the number and location of students with a disability enrolled in mainstream programs;
- TAFE needed to liaise with appropriate organisations, e.g. the Department of Human Services and Health, employment agencies supporting people with disabilities and voluntary organisations;
- Staff development programs aimed at better equipping TAFE teaching staff to deal with people with disabilities were needed; and
- There was a need to clarify the role of TAFE in the provision of a wide range of special non mainstream programs to those with a wide variety of disabilities.

There were no formal recommendations. The report, in its conclusion sought the views of both the providers and disabled recipients of TAFE mainstream programs. Although little data were collected on the participation rates for the groups reviewed, it would appear that the problems associated with meeting the needs of this group of clients have resulted in lower than expected enrolments. The program providers were concerned with the provision of funding in the form of designated grants in order to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Students with disabilities felt that all too often the system used to meet their needs was ad hoc, influenced by prevailing exigencies with little regard for future planning. Although many individuals throughout the TAFE systems in Australia were caring and sensitive to the needs of students with disabilities, it appears that more support at an organisational level was essential if participation rates for students with disabilities were to improve.

The report identifies gaps in national level policy directions for students with disabilities in the TAFE sector and the overall coordination of TAFE nationally for students with disabilities as well as a lack of staff development and support for TAFE teachers dealing with students with disabilities. Further, a large number of findings of this report are addressed in the report, *FlexAbility*. (see below)

FlexAbility: A Strategic Framework for People with Disabilities in TAFE

Publication details

Queensland Department of Employment, Vocational Education, Training and Industrial Relations, *FlexAbility: A strategic framework for people with disabilities in TAFE, 1994-1996*, Queensland Department of Employment, Vocational Education, Training and Industrial Relations.

Synopsis

FlexAbility builds on the equity initiatives of Australia's TAFE systems to ensure people with disabilities participate in the benefits of the national training reform agenda. It also supports other government initiatives for people with disabilities. *FlexAbility* was developed to assist State/Territory TAFE systems to equalise opportunities for people with disabilities in vocational education and training.

Does the report have an implementation/program or research/policy focus?

Mainly it has an implementation focus.

Key concerns of the report

The main concern for *FlexAbility* is to improve the capacity of TAFE systems to respond to the particular requirements of people with disabilities. Providing a framework through which State/Territory TAFE systems can develop implementation plans and strategies which are relevant to local conditions, clarifying TAFE's role in the provision of programs and services for people with disabilities, and providing the means to complement the national training reform agenda and other societal changes likely to affect on the provision of vocational education and training for people with disabilities were cited.

FlexAbility has 6 goals (with a number of objectives under each) aimed at addressing the key issues surrounding vocational education and training for people with disabilities. Performance indicators, strategies, proposed national projects and current best practice examples accompany each of these. Three themes emerge which represent the most significant concerns namely:

- Participation levels;
- Fair and equitable practices; and
- Outcomes.

Women with Disabilities and TAFE, Project Report

Publication details

Lawless, K. 1991, *Women with Disabilities and TAFE, Project Report,*
Department of Employment and Technical and Further, Education, Adelaide.

Synopsis

This report was prepared for the Vocational Education Employment and Training Advisory Committee (VEETAC) Women's Standing Committee. It suggests strategies to improve educational and vocational opportunities and outcomes for women with disabilities. Key issues considered in the report include attitudes, information dissemination, financial difficulties, support, transport and access.

Does the report have an implementation/program or research/policy focus?

The report has an implementation/program focus.

Key concerns of the report

The study aimed to compile an action plan that would improve both the educational and vocational opportunities and outcomes for women.

The study was concerned with the poor image women with disabilities, and how TAFE was strategically placed to play a key role in developing the competencies of women with disabilities.

Key findings/recommendations

The findings of the report identified 6 significant issues affecting education and training for women with disabilities. They were:

- Data - data collection mechanisms instituted for women with disabilities in TAFE were inadequate and/or client insensitive;
- Support - while TAFE provides a number of support services and specialised equipment, there is still a shortfall in providing appropriate support to ensure success;
- Transport and physical access - students with mobility impairments experience some difficulties at some campuses. Cost and after dark security were also seen as barriers to attending TAFE;
- Professional development - lack of understanding and awareness about gender and disability issues affects the realistic and successful integration of women with disabilities in TAFE. Staff expressed the need for suitable professional development training in this area;
- Income support - financial hardship was identified as a major barrier to participation in TAFE;
- Information dissemination - there was a lack of targeted, clear and accessible information to present and potential students on the services and options for education, employment and training.

Specific recommendations:

- That this report be considered by the chair of VEETAC project on the marketing of TAFE to ensure the needs of women with disabilities are adequately dealt with by the project;
- That the chair of the national Committee on TAFE and Training Statistics (COTTS) be approached … to jointly fund a national project that investigates the best means of collecting and using data, and educating about data, on students with disabilities;
- That the VEETAC Women's Standing Committee recommend to VEETAC that it support the development of a national plan for students with disabilities in TAFE to adequately address the double disadvantage that women with disabilities experience;
- That the national staff development project on teaching students with disabilities specifically address the double disadvantage experienced by women with disabilities;
- That the VEETAC Women's Standing Committee forward this report to COTTS for consideration in developing a student database;
- The report acknowledges a gap in the knowledge on women with disabilities and the general poor image of women with disabilities. It argues for the need to focus on the competence side rather than the disability side.

More Than Able: People with a Disability and Small Business

Publication Details

Employment & Skills Formation Council, NBEET, *1994, More Than Able: People with a Disability and Small Business,* Canberra.

Synopsis

The Employment and Skills Formation Council's task was to advise on employment in small business for people with disabilities. The focus in the report is on people with disabilities who are in open employment, either as employees in small business, or as owner/managers of their own small businesses. A primary objective of the report recommendations is to improve skill levels in small business as a direct means of achieving high performance and growth.

Does the report have an implementation/program or research/policy focus?

The report has a research and implementation/program focus, but primarily the latter.

Key concerns of the report

The report deals briefly with education and training issues for people with a disability. Essentially it argues for access by people with disabilities to mainstream provision, supported by appropriate special services, but goes into no detail about the achievement of these. However it places emphasis on extending existing labour market programs, which may have an impact on skills formation for people with disabilities.

Key findings/recommendations

This report contains recommendations calling primarily for changes or extensions to existing labour market programs assisting people with disabilities. The recommendations are directed at DEET and DHSH. The objectives of the recommendations are to enhance employment opportunities for people with a disability in small business, either as employees or owner/managers.

Commonwealth Disability Strategy: A Ten Year Framework for Commonwealth Departments and Agencies

Publication Details

Commonwealth Department of Human Services and Health, 1994, *Commonwealth Disability Strategy: A Ten Year Framework for Commonwealth Departments and Agencies,* Canberra.

Synopsis

The Strategy is a ten year planning framework for Commonwealth agencies to ensure access to all Commonwealth programs, services and functions for people with a disability. The framework provides for action by Commonwealth departments and agencies to progressively remove barriers for people with disabilities. The document is targeted at Commonwealth government planners, policy developers and program administrators and those responsible for accountability for performance.

Does the report have an implementation/program or research/policy focus?

The report has an implementation/program focus.

Key concerns of the report

People with disabilities are under represented both in vocational education and training programs, and over represented among unemployed people. Access to vocational education has improved, but more needs to be done. Flexible delivery will play an important role in this effort. Flexibility in delivery is essential for people with disabilities to maximise opportunities for success at training through, reasonable adjustment, information presented in appropriate format, and modified methods of assessment.

Key findings/recommendations

The key recommendations are summarised below:

- That DEET and other appropriate agencies pursue approaches to achieve participation rates and outcomes for people with disabilities that are comparable to those of the general population;
- The AVC will include developing a strategy to achieve participation rates and training outcomes for people with disabilities comparable to the whole population. This will include mechanisms for monitoring and public reporting on participation rates, and outcomes achieved;
- That ANTA provide monitoring reports to the Australian Disability Consultative Committee;
- That ANTA develop a national Equal Opportunity plan for people with disabilities. The plan to include mechanisms to ensure people with disabilities achieve fair access, participation and outcomes from all parts of the vocational training system; (to be done by 1995);
- That DEET assist ANTA to develop the plan in line with progress on implementing the National Strategy for Equity in Schooling and the National Plan for Equity in Higher Education.

Threat and Opportunity: Workplace Reform and Disability: A Study of Entry Level Employment and Opportunities for People with Disabilities in the Light of Award Restructuring and the Training Reform Agenda

Publication Details

Reynolds, Reaburn, & Barnett, Kate, National Centre for Vocational Education Research Australia. Department of Employment Education and Training, Economic and Policy Analysis Division, 1993, *Threat and Opportunity: Workplace Reform and Disability: A Study of Entry Level Employment and Opportunities for People with Disabilities in the Light of Award Restructuring and the Training Reform Agenda,* National Centre for Vocational Education Research Ltd., Adelaide.

Synopsis

This study examines the impact of award restructuring and competency standards on employment at entry level for people with disabilities. It explores the opportunities which exist (or might be established) for people with disabilities to access training which will lead to jobs and career paths in an award 'restructured' world. It is essentially a study based in the harsh realities of employment in 1993. It draws its information from employers and employees and their representatives rather than from schools, TAFE or other training institutions. It is a preliminary study which helps develop a methodology which could be employed in a more comprehensive, wide-ranging research project. The study also outlines in an appendix a range of questions which arose during the study and which clearly require further resolution.

Does the report have an implementation/program or research/policy focus?

The report has a research/policy focus.

Key concerns of the report

The study examined entry level employment for people with disabilities in the light of the training reform agenda and award restructuring, and the related development of competency standards, competency based training, multiskilling, workplace reform and organisational restructuring.

Key findings/recommendations

For people with disabilities it seems that the training reform agenda is both a threat and an opportunity. Multiskilling presents a particular problem for people with disabilities. So do the demands for generic competencies as envisaged in the Mayer report (1992). This is a particular problem for people with an intellectual disability (who comprise the largest disability group at school leaving age).

There is a danger that more formalised and standardised assessment procedures will result in people with disabilities being 'assessed out'. On the other hand, competency based selection and employment practices mitigate against attitudinal factors which could negatively affect people with disabilities. From a training perspective clear targets are set and employment is more likely to be based on demonstrated merit related to on the job abilities. Recognition of prior learning and flexible vocational pathways should prove advantageous to people with disabilities.

The study suggests there need to be modifications in developing assessment policies and argues for the linking of competencies, slow workers' permits and other sub award wage assessments to a national competency standards scheme for people with extensive handicaps for employment.

It also argues for more finely grained accreditation between levels and the development of training activities and competency standards at a pre Level 1 standard.

Note: Only the training recommendations from the report are summarised below.

The report identifies a need for the following:

- Recognition that some system of pre Level 1 competency standard training is required;
- A more finely grained approach to competency standards that would recognise partial increments above (and below) ASF Level 1;
- Extension of the 'principle of reasonable adjustment' to some recombination of elements and units of competency;
- Pursuit of a fair sub award wages system which links competency, slow workers' permits and other systems used in the calculation of sub award wages;
- Review of the place of key competencies as necessities for all workers in an award restructured world of work; and
- Flexible assessment procedures designed in conjunction with the person with disabilities and/or their advocate. This should apply equally to on the job assessment, in training settings and in the recognition of prior learning.

The preliminary results in this report suggest that further research is needed including more industries with a combination of case studies and face to face interviews.

Competency Assessment Mechanisms and Reasonable Adjustment. A Report to DEET.

Publication Details

Disability Services, NSW TAFE Commission, *Competency Assessment Mechanisms and Reasonable Adjustment. A Report to DEET.*

Synopsis

Competency Assessment Mechanisms and Reasonable Adjustment is a national study commissioned DEET. Its purpose was to identify possible sources of bias against people with a disability in existing and proposed assessment in vocational education and the workplace, and to develop principles of best practice assessment to eliminate this bias, with practical guidelines for those participating in assessment in the national training reform framework.

Does the report have an implementation/program or research/policy focus?

The report has a research and implementation focus.

What are the key findings/concerns of the report?

- General practical guidelines for formative and summative assessment have been developed, but more work is needed on developing;
  - guidelines on cost effective recognition of prior learning and current competencies; and
  - Innovative models for diagnostic assessment.

- Holistic assessment has many implications for equitable and cost effective implementation of best practice assessment principles, particularly in vocational education and training, where there is more reliance on simulation and generalisation;
- There is a need for suitable training programs leading to registered provider status for a wide range of assessors;
- The lack of information and training in general competency assessment and in general disability issues is a major barrier to fair outcomes;
- Any personnel involved in carrying out assessment as part of the national training program will need training themselves which will be a time consuming and costly exercise;
- There is a danger that people currently working effectively will be disadvantaged in employment if assessment systems are based too rigidly on industry standards that do not take into account the many adjustments currently being made without causing 'unjustifiable hardship';
- Best practice assessment must combine national training reform and disability reform principles;
- Any guidelines on reasonable adjustment in assessment should contain a summary of relevant legislation and government policy as well as a statement on the principles of best practice assessment.

Key findings/recommendations

- That the 'Principle of Reasonable Adjustment' be incorporated in the list of principles in all national training reform agenda materials, e.g. the National Framework for the Recognition of Training, ACTRAC Curriculum Guidelines, Workplace Trainers Competency Standards and Assessors Competency Standards;
- That the National Training Board give priority to completing the Elimination of Bias Project, with input from representatives of the disability community, and undertake a follow up project in three years time to identify any unintended negative outcomes for people with a disability in the National Competency Standards;
- That national Industry Training Advisory Bodies conduct ongoing studies into the nature and extent of reasonable adjustments in the workplace, in order to ensure that industry standards take account of current practice, and keep pace with further adjustments made as participation by people with a disability in the workforce increases;
- That every nationally accredited training program or course for assessors incorporate training on reasonable adjustment in assessment, including the use of adaptive equipment and referral procedures where necessary;
- That TAFE, industry and other training providers develop and use a range of high quality competency based training and assessment materials designed to meet a range of educational needs, including the various needs of people with a disability;
- That every nationally registered course available throughout the vocational education and training system, i.e. across TAFE, industry and other training providers be inclusive of reasonable adjustment;
- That the Disability Discrimination Act Standards Working Party target the development of vocational education and training disability standards as a priority;
- That a register of consultants with expertise in reasonable adjustment for particular disability groups and individuals be established;
- That research be funded into the implications of this report for the recognition of current competencies including assessment at different skill levels, with an emphasis on how best to ensure that people with a disability have equitable access to this kind of assessment; and

- That progress in the implementation of each of these recommendations be regularly monitored by a Reasonable Adjustment Advisory Committee comprising representatives of the disability community, training providers and industry.

TAFE Disability Services for Students with Learning Disabilities: Current Situation and Future Directions

Publication Details

Morris, C. 1993, *TAFE Disability Services for Students with Learning Disabilities: Current Situation and Future Directions,* New South Wales Technical and Further Education Commission, Sydney.

Synopsis

The purpose of this report was to contribute to the service provision for students with learning disabilities in the NSW TAFE system. The current levels of met and unmet demand by students with learning disabilities were investigated and a working definition of the term 'students with learning disabilities' was formulated. Options for enhancing participation in NSW TAFE by people with learning disabilities were recommended.

Does the report have an implementation/program or research/policy focus?

The report has an implementation/program focus.

Key concerns of the report

- To formulate a working definition of students with learning liabilities;
- To investigate the current levels of met and unmet demand by students with learning disabilities of TAFE service, and ascertain the adequacy of the service provision by TAFE to such students; and
- To investigate options for enhancing participation in TAFE by people with learning disabilities.

Key findings/recommendations

The report advocates that teacher consultants for students with intellectual disabilities broaden their target group to embrace the new definition of learning disabilities recommended in the report and become teacher-consultants for students with learning disabilities, to cater for all those on the continuum.

The key recommendations from the report summarised below are that:

- Resourcing to teacher-consultants for learning disabilities be adjusted to allow for students' needs as identified in each student's individual support plan;
- Collaboration of resources and people, be streamlined within TAFE to ensure the best learning outcomes for individual students are achieved;
- The focus of support for students with learning disabilities be on learning outcomes as defined within competency based training;

- A human resource management package be developed for use when teaching/supporting students with learning disabilities;
- Each institute develop a 6 month pilot project to support students with learning disabilities; and
- Each institute to implement full support for students with learning disabilities using best practice pilot projects as models.

REPORT SUMMARIES

PEOPLE FROM NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING BACKGROUNDS

Focus on the Future: New Training Directions for Non-English Speaking Background People

Publication Details

Non English Speaking Background Ministerial Consultative Group on Vocational Education and Training, 1995, Seminar proceedings, *Focus on the Future: New Training Directions for Non-English Speaking Background People*, AGPS, Canberra.

Synopsis

This report contains a series of papers presented at a seminar coordinated by the Non-English Speaking Background Ministerial Consultative Group on Vocational Education and Training and should be read in conjunction with *One Size Fits Some! Competency Based Training and Non-English Speaking Background People*.

Does the report have an implementation/program or research/ policy focus?

Four parallel workshops followed the seminar addressing the following topics: Training for Productive Diversity; Recognition of Prior Learning; Information Systems; and, Access to Training. Each workshop identified priorities and then suggested specific strategies. Most of the strategies were orientated to the implementation/program focus.

Key concerns of the report

As the report is a collection of papers presented at the seminar, the concerns differ from one paper to the next. However the common concerns of most papers were:

- The current low levels of non-English speaking background people in employment and training, in particular non-English speaking background women; and
- The impact of the national training reform initiatives on this group, with particular reference to participation in training.

Key findings/recommendations

There are no recommendations, each workshop identified priority issues and recommended implementation strategies to go with these. The priorities were:

- Integration of language, literacy and cultural issues and understanding within VET and the training reform agenda;
- Acceptance of productive diversity by industry;
- The recognition and valuing of cultural diversity and languages other than English skills;
- Responsiveness of training to capitalise on productive diversity;
- Understanding of recognition of prior learning by employers, unions, industry trainers and middle management;
- Assessment procedures for recognition of prior learning;

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- Inadequacy of competency based assessment with respect to particular skills such as experience, cultural, linguistics, etc.;
- Information availability, content, delivery and targeting;
- Current resources, change agents and processes which do not focus on non-English speaking background people's issues in the workplace;
- Training program infrastructure and pathways are barriers to entry and outcomes for non-English speaking background workers;
- Lack of comprehensive data to inform the training and information needs of non-English speaking background workers;
- Cultural appropriateness and inclusivity of training content, and accessibility of this training to all sectors of the workforce, irrespective of language and literacy in English;
- Improving workplace culture - promoting the value of diversity and training culture to employers;
- Ensuring accessible, appropriate and adequately resourced delivery of
- vocational English language and other training;
- Policy versus practice - policy is not always articulated as such, but is often put forward as a 'good thing';
- Implementation strategies and accountability need to be integrated with policy;
- Ownership of equity issues by key decision makers.

One Size Fits Some! Competency Based Training and Non-English Speaking Background People

Publication Details

Non-English Speaking Background Ministerial Consultative Group on Vocational Education and Training, 1995, *One Size Fits Some! Competency Based Training and Non-English Speaking Background People*, AGPS, Canberra.

Synopsis

This report presents independent research commissioned by the Non-English Speaking Background Ministerial Consultative Group on Vocational Education and Training on the impact of competency based training on non-English speaking background people entering, and in, the labour market.

Competency based approaches to the establishment of standards, training and assessment have been adopted by industry, governments and unions as the cornerstone of Australia's training reform agenda. Potentially, competency-based training offers greatly improved, more flexible means of skills acquisition and career progression for all groups in society, including those which have tended to be under recognised or disadvantaged. This report looks at competency based training and the main issues for non-English speaking background people in the workplace and argues for a systematic and comprehensive implementation of the Commonwealth Government's access and equity policy objectives in the vocational education and training sectors in industry.

Does the report have an implementation/program or research/policy focus?

The report focuses primarily on implementation and program development.

Key concerns of the report

The report argues that the main issues for non-English speaking background people in the workplace are as follows:

- The complexity of the agenda and associated structures;
- The agenda's narrow, monoculturalist perspective;
- Inadequacy of the approach to access and equity;
- Lack of good models and systematic approaches;
- Meeting the costs;
- Non-English speaking background employees' awareness of the national training reform agenda;
- The importance of English for participation in training and workplace reform; and
- The importance of the local work environment.

The report considers these issues along with:

- The development and use of industry competency standards in the workplace;
- Curriculum development;
- Recognition of prior learning;
- Training delivery; and
- Assessment structures and practices in the workplace.

Key findings/recommendations

There are detailed findings within this framework of concerns which can be divided into two categories: policy and structures, and implementation. (This summary of findings of *One Size Fits Some* was drawn from the related report *Focus on the Future*.)

The report argues that in regard to policy and structures of the national training reform agenda:

- There is little awareness at a general community level about the national training reform agenda, or about competency based training. The problem largely lies with the sheer complexity of the agenda as much as the language barriers;
- Issues concerning language, culture, gender and lack of access to education are seen by those guiding the national training reform agenda as minority issues;
- The one-size-fits-all approach of the national training reform agenda often places non-English speaking background women in particular at a disadvantage;
- There is an emphasis on highlighting the skills non-English speaking background people lack, as opposed to focusing on what they do have;
- Most vocational curriculum is not geared to operator level training;
- Vocational courses often over-estimate the English language skills required in workplaces;
- The government subsidised language and literacy courses targeted at non-English speaking background people are not generally accredited in relation to industry certificates;
- At both the national and local levels, non-English speaking background people tend to be under represented in key decision making forums, and bodies associated with the national training reform agenda such as consultative committees and training committees;
- Non-English speaking background people are also under represented in roles such as union officials, on-the-job trainers or workplace assessors.

In regard to implementation:

- Access and equity tend to be dealt with in a passive way in many workplaces. There is a lack of good models and practical strategies for making training equitable;
- There is a scarcity of financial resources and documented examples to assist standards bodies and curriculum developers;
- Lack of coordination between different bodies and agencies means that few people are aware of the models of good practice and the resources that do exist;
- Training programs that take into account the needs of non-English speaking background employees are generally not the result of major funding initiatives from the vocational training system, but from individuals and short term funding initiatives;
- With the increased cost of training, there is little agreement as to who is responsible for training non-English speaking background workers with limited language skills. Most funding for workplace education of non-English speaking background workers has been met by the WELL (Workplace English Language and Literacy) program.

Review of the Report on the Australian Vocational Certificate Training System. Access and Equity Considerations for Non-English Speaking Background People in Australia

Publication Details

Miltenyi, G. & Minis, P. *Review of the Report on the Australian Vocational Certificate Training System. Access and Equity Considerations for Non-English Speaking Background People in Australia,* Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Canberra.

Synopsis

The Review of the Report on the Australian Vocational Training System was prepared in response to a request by the Office of Multicultural Affairs, the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. The specific areas addressed within the Review are: implication of the Report for non-English speaking background communities; policy implications flowing from the Report; and recommendations to ensure that implementation of the Report delivers greater access and equity relating to educational services.

Does the report have an implementation/program or research/policy focus?

The report has both a policy and implementation focus.

Key concerns of the report

The Report argues that is clear that non-English speaking background people are disadvantaged in all main aspects of education and training under existing arrangements. Therefore:

- If the participation and attainment of non-English speaking background people in the AVCTS is lower than for other workforce and vocational training participants, then the overall efficiency of the AVCTS will be adversely affected;
- If the position of non-English speaking background people is unchanged by the new system then the disadvantages will be likely to persist and a rare opportunity to improve access and equity will have been missed; and
- If the position of non-English speaking background people is worsened by the new system, then a major philosophical objective of the AVCTS is not only being thwarted, but turned on its end.

The major finding of the authors of the Review is 'that the AVCTS as proposed does not guarantee improved access and equity for non-English speaking background people. While some elements of the new system may benefit non-English speaking background people, the more commonly predicted outcome is the operation of existing economic, labour market,and cultural factors which contribute to disadvantage will be left untouched and in some cases exacerbated by the AVCTS as currently proposed.'

Key findings/recommendations

There are 31 recommendations which relate to 10 key issues, namely:

- Non-English speaking background people and the labour market;
- Cultural considerations;
- Core competency English package;
- Issues associated with working your way through the AVCTS;
- Potential for alienation within the proposed system;
- Training contracts;
- Reliance on labour market programs;
- Issues related to the overall operation of the system;
- Target setting; and
- Need for intervention and monitoring by Office of Multicultural Affairs.

Manufacturing Uncertainty: Non-English Speaking Background Women and Training

Publication Details

Stephens, J. & Bertone, S. *Manufacturing Uncertainty: Non-English Speaking Background Women and Training*, AGPS, Canberra.

Synopsis

This report looks at the specific experience of a sample of non-English speaking background women in the manufacturing industry to identify: the factors responsible for disadvantage; current trends affecting access and participation of non-English speaking background women in work-related training; recent initiatives to improve the situation; and any successes that can be used as a model for future reforms.

Does the report have an implementation/program or research/policy focus?

Primarily the report has a research focus.

Key concerns of the report

In the past, non-English speaking background women have been powerless to shape change in the workplace, or have influence in the production systems at workplaces. The authors see the current workplace restructuring, greater flexibility etc. as having the potential to offer more opportunities to non-English speaking background women workers which were not widely available to them in the past: opportunities to receive structured, accredited training; upgrade skills; move between jobs; and access to career paths. But they also highlight the vulnerabilities of this group, particularly in the area of skills and readiness to participate in change.

This report draws on the findings of research conducted by Baker and Wooden (1991). It is worth reiterating some of the findings as they are relevant to the findings of Stephens and Bertone.

The most common form of work related training undertaken by non-English speaking background women is on the job training, followed by in-house training much of which is informal and not accredited. The nature of such training would suggest that non-English speaking background women will be disadvantaged by work reforms which emphasise structured accredited training, such as industry certificates.

Stephens' and Bertone's report also questions the capacity of on the job training to adequately equip non-English speaking background women with the skills and knowledge required to work in the restructured workplaces of the future.

Specifically the report was concerned with investigating:

- The specific experience of a sample of non-English speaking background women in the manufacturing industry in relation to work-related training;
- The specific factors responsible for the disadvantaged position of these non-English speaking background women in relation to work-related training (social, cultural, economic and personal). This would incorporate comparisons with other groups such as non-English speaking background men, and English speaking background men and women;
- Current trends in the manufacturing industry (such as award restructuring, competency-based training, enterprise bargaining, the Training Guarantee Act) which may affect the future access and participation of non-English speaking background women in work-related training;
- Recent initiatives in the manufacturing industry which have the potential to improve the access and participation of non-English speaking background women in work-related training; and
- Any 'success stories' relating to individuals or groups of non-English speaking background women which can be used as a model for future reforms in this area.

Four case studies were undertaken and although the implementation of training differed, the findings indicated that there were some:

- Clear similarities in perceptions and attitudes toward work-related training;
- Important indications about barriers to training; and
- Projections about future work profiles that raise concerns about the employment prospects of workers with low levels of skills and English language proficiency.

Key findings/recommendations

In detail the findings include:

- That there was a consistently positive attitude demonstrated by non-English speaking background women towards training. High proportions of women interviewed indicated that if they were trained to speak better English, there would be real benefits: they would apply for better paid jobs; it would be easier to get a better job; they would enjoy work more; and they would do more training at work;
- Whilst a high percentage of non-English speaking background women indicated interest in work-related training, the number of them wishing to undertake training in order to become a supervisor or leading hand was uniformly quite low, although in some cases higher than for the corresponding Australian born/English speaking background women

and men or non-English speaking background men;

- At companies where training in the workplace was not established, over 85% of non-English speaking background women interviewed considered training was worth doing. However there was evidence that this willingness would not extend to participate in training outside work hours;
- At companies where training did exist, nearly half of the sample non-English speaking background women had not participated in any work-related training. Their reasons (given in order) were: their English was not good enough to participate; training was outside normal work hours; it took too long to finish; it was in unpaid time; and they had child care difficulties;
- A major reason for the lower participation rate of non-English speaking background women in training is the difficulty with English language;
- Information provision at the workplace about changes at work was uniformly poor. Little was known or understood about award restructuring, enterprise bargaining or available training; and
- Opportunities to move to different types of work and perform a variety of tasks, i.e. multiskilling was not afforded to non-English speaking background women especially.

There were no recommendations but suggestions for further research. These were:

- Given the greater number of non-English speaking background women in community services than in manufacturing, the findings of this study suggest that it would be important to investigate issues related to non-English speaking background women's participation in workplace reform and training in community services. As the community services industry differs significantly from manufacturing in many of its characteristics, such as structure of ownership, size of undertaking, workforce composition and employment practices, a study of this area may provide important and unique insights into the situation of non-English speaking background women with respect to training in this industry;
- An area which appears to have been little researched is that of management perceptions and attitudes to the training of non-English speaking background workers, both men and women. A larger study which focused on this aspect could provide valuable data, from a management perspective, on reasons for training patterns across various industries, particularly in relation to non-English speaking background workers. The findings of this research would assist policy-makers in determining how best to allocate training resources to various industries; and
- A follow up study on non-English speaking background women and training in the manufacturing industry to be conducted in five years time is recommended in order to ascertain what changes, if any, have occurred in the implementation of industry certificates and the participation of non-English speaking background women in such training. It would be important to gauge whether the attitudes and experiences of non-English speaking background women with regard to training have changed, and whether they have succeeded in gaining more access to training or remain under represented in training activities.

Education and Training Needs of Women from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds

Publication Details

Zinopoulos, L. 1992, *Education and Training Needs of Women from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds*, DEET, Canberra.

Synopsis

This was a national project of the *Women and TAFE: A National Plan of Action*. It provides direction to improve further education, training and retraining opportunities for women from non-English speaking backgrounds. The report incorporates a literature search followed by a synthesis of education and training issues for women from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Does the report have an implementation/program or research/policy focus?

The report has a research and implementation focus.

Key concerns of the report

The report argues that women's participation in education and training is affected not only by gender issues, but also by the interrelationships between gender and a range of other factors including cultural/linguistic background, age, socioeconomic circumstances, familial responsibilities, prior learning and employment experiences and, pre- and post-immigration experiences.The report attempts to provide a framework for TAFE to address this challenge for women from non-English speaking backgrounds.

The report identifies issues that need to be addressed by the National Action Plan as:

- The provision of national comprehensive, gender inclusive 'ethnicity data' on the participation rates of persons from non-English speaking backgrounds in TAFE;
- The development of profiles of first and second generation women from non-English speaking backgrounds in TAFE;
- Cross cultural training for TAFE staff to become an integral part of the overall human resource development plan at both State and national levels;
- Non-English speaking background women's inclusion at the decision making levels; the acquisition of English language skills as vital in promoting non-English speaking background women's participation in education, employment and training; consistent monitoring and evaluation to avoid marginalisation of non-English speaking background women's needs;
- Careful assessment of proposed directions for young people's participation in post-compulsory education and training in relation to young non-English speaking background women;
- The need for award restructuring to take into account the limited access to training of non-English speaking background women, and TAFE to ensure that they are involved in carrying out a training needs analysis and skills audit for non-English speaking background clients;
- The need for recognition of training and the systematic combined assessment of the skills and language level of immigrants as a means of effective course referral;
- Inadequate provision of childcare services (along with access to English, the major documented barrier to non-English speaking background women in VET);
- The need to address the specific needs of rural women from non-English speaking

backgrounds; and

- The impact of tuition fees and other associated study costs on non-English speaking background women.

Key findings/recommendations

The recommendations relate to the above concerns.

Training for What? Non-English Speaking Background Women and the National Training Reform Agenda

Publication Details

Bertone, S. Workplace Studies Centre, Victoria University of Technology, 1995, for the Association of Non-English Speaking Background Women of Australia, *Training for What? Non-English Speaking Background Women and the National Training Reform Agenda*, AGPS, Canberra: 1995

Synopsis

This small qualitative study analyses the extent to which the training reform agenda addresses the cultural, linguistic and social situation of non-English speaking background women workers, and identifies practical suggestions for dealing with the specific needs of non-English speaking background women in relation to training. It involved interviews with stakeholders and focus group discussions involving 41 women in workplaces drawn from the health services, electronics and textile, clothing and footwear industries.

While the study identifies some positive aspects of the training reform agenda as it impacts upon non-English speaking background women workers, it is critical of a number of aspects of the training reform implementation and operation in regard to this group, particularly concerning: recognition of prior learning; data collection; the degree of integration of ESL and literacy training with vocational training; access to training; the provision of information to non-English speaking background women workers on the training reform agenda and its relationship to workplace reform; and 'productive diversity' (the need for higher recognition of the linguistic and cultural skills held by non-English speaking background workers). The report recommends a number of broad strategies to address these concerns, with an emphasis on the development of demonstration projects.

Does the report have an implementation/program or research/policy focus?

The Report aims to address both levels of activity in training reform; the macro level of policy development and the micro level of workplace implementation. However its main focus is the workplace and the achievement of concrete improvements for non-English speaking background women workers in relation to vocational training.

The study is relatively small, and reinforces the findings of previous studies of non-English speaking background women workers and vocational training rather than contributing significantly new data. However, it contributes important insights into the impact of training reform agenda on this group of workers.

Key concerns of the report

The study finds that non-English speaking background women express very positive attitudes to training and a desire to participate in it, provided the barriers and problems they face could be addressed. The findings reflect earlier research that non-English speaking background women receive less vocational training, both on and off the job, than any other group of workers and when they do receive training, there is a tendency for it to be pre-vocational, usually in language and literacy.

The Report concentrates on a range of concerns expressed by stakeholders and focus group participants including:

- The amount of training provided and policies for determining the allocation of training places;
- Difficulties with English language and the widespread perception held by non-English speaking background women that training imposed English literacy demands which they would be unable to meet;
- Lack of recognition of skills and competencies already held; problems with delivery of training, such as staff relief, lack of flexibility and outside normal paid time delivery;
- Inadequate access to information about training;
- A perception that non-English speaking background women are provided with less opportunities than other, Australian-born workers; and
- The continued use of rigid Taylorist work practices based on narrow, repetitive jobs, raising the question of the purpose of training.

Key findings/recommendations

These appear in the form of strategies paraphrased below:

Recognition of Prior Learning

- To develop RPL processes through well resourced demonstration projects, which provide general principles and principles specific to non-English speaking background women workers;
- ANTA to develop and implement model processes for RPL, funding demonstration projects in industries where non-English speaking background women have a high representation and focussing on operator-level occupations in a range of workplaces; and
- To develop and implement processes for achieving national accreditation of skills and training held by non-English speaking background women.

Data Collection

- ANTA to make national data on training participation by specific workforce groups available to all industry parties, followed by a publicity and education campaign focusing on access and equity for disadvantaged groups in the training reform agenda including dissemination of best practice principles - to be coordinated with ITABs, state training bodies and DEET; and
- That the non-English speaking background VET Committee facilitate a project to research the progress of training reform in industries where non-English speaking background women have a high representation, giving particular attention to the extent to which access and equity measures have been incorporated and how much training has been provided to non-English speaking background women in those industries.

Integration of Training

- WELL program to actively promote the integration of English language and literacy training into existing industry training, with funding conditional upon such a commitment by the parties where they are close to implementing accredited vocational training for operator-level employees.

Access to Training

- To ensure that individual workplaces in receipt of state or national funding assistance for training establish and resource workplace training committees and incorporate affirmative action measures to facilitate non-English speaking background women's participation in these committees, by adopting these steps as accountability and monitoring measures; and
- As a matter of principle, wherever possible, ensure that training courses are organised during paid working time.

Information

- Ensure that information campaigns for non-English speaking background women on training reform acknowledge that training needs for non-English speaking background women are specific and require targeted dissemination; and
- That DEET and ANTA develop an information campaign using a range of publicity, multi-lingual wherever possible, aimed at informing non-English speaking background women of training reform and its relationship to workplace reform - to be distributed through a range of relevant nominated venues.

Productive Diversity

- That the Office of Multicultural Affairs fund a demonstration project within the community services and health industries which researches and implements measures to recognise linguistic/cultural skills held by non-English speaking background women and examines the development of principles for bilingual training programs as an alternative to training in English.

Vocational Education and Training Issues for People of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Non-English Speaking Background

Publication Details

NSW TAFE Multicultural Education Unit, NSW TAFE Aboriginal Development Unit and EMD Multicultural Marketing Management, for the Reference Group on the Status of Vocational Education and Training, DEET, 1995, *Vocational Education and Training Issues for People of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Non-English Speaking Background,* NSW TAFE Multicultural Unit, Sydney.

Synopsis

This study examines issues of access, participation and outcomes in VET for students from Aboriginal or non-English speaking backgrounds and how these might be affected by perceptions of the VET system. Qualitative research involved 22 bilingual focus group discussions with parents, community members and students from the target communities in QLD, NSW and SA, supplemented with interviews with 44 key representatives from the same three states. Quantitative research involved analysis of three national statistics samples: (ABS Census 1991 data on TAFE enrolment; NCVER Pilot National Client Follow-up Survey of Vocational Education Graduates, supplemented and validated by State data where available and reliable); and, DEET national data on apprenticeships and traineeships. The purpose was to identify issues of participation in VET by the target communities, their satisfaction with the delivery of VET, and the outcomes of their participation in VET.

Does the report have an implementation/program or research/policy focus?

The report concentrates primarily on TAFE provision and does not have a workplace focus. There is a mixture of implementation and policy recommendations, with more emphasis on the former.

Key concerns of the report

The research shows that:

- Among people of non-English speaking background, perceptions by potential students and their parents generally reflected a low opinion and appreciation of VET, in keeping with broader community views. TAFE qualifications were generally not valued by the non-English speaking background communities and target students and there was a negative perception of the employment value of VET, which is seen as training for the unemployed;

- There is a lack of detailed knowledge about the components of VET amongst non-English speaking background communities, with TAFE the best known, and traineeships and the AVCTS the least known. Non-English speaking background parents are particularly important in influencing career decisions of their children, yet their knowledge of VET, in general, is limited;

- Language and literacy proficiency is one of the main barriers to VET for potential non-English speaking background students. The need to undertake pre-VET language and literacy training reduces the financial support available for VET through DEET's labour market programs and hence the duration of supported VET for the targeted communities. Other barriers include: increased competition for VET places; transport restrictions and availability of course options in rural and remote regions; availability of campus based childcare; lack of employment reducing access to the structured entry-level component of VET; lack of information and inappropriate promotional materials;

- Overall the participation of people born overseas from non-English speaking backgrounds is generally relatively high. This encouraging finding is undermined though, by the under-representation of non-English speaking background youth in VET, an under-representation of non-English speaking background people in apprenticeships and traineeships and the over-concentration of participants in the general and preparatory fields of study, which may also partly explain the poorer employment outcomes of the target group. Participants considered that VET improves employability but does not result in employment, and indeed employment outcomes;

- The quality of VET delivery and services was generally considered to be satisfactory, with a preference for college-based childcare expressed by non-English speaking background students with children and support voiced for educational staff from the target communities.

Key findings/recommendations

Perceptions and Knowledge

- That a specific marketing effort be targeted at non-English speaking background communities to improve perceptions of TAFE, including information on the value of TAFE qualifications;
- That vocational counselling and career education also target parents of potential students and community members in target groups, including restructuring resources and modes of delivery and ensuring appropriate training for counsellors and advisors;
- That non-English speaking background VET students be encouraged to build strong identification and links with, and respect for, VET institutions and to take on responsibility for informing their communities about VET options; and
- That a study be commissioned to review the model of career and vocational counselling used by schools and VET systems to identify and eliminate cultural and linguistic bias.

Barriers to VET

- That DEET review its eligibility criteria for participation in labour market training to facilitate the participation of members of the target group in DEET-funded labour market programs, and review its eligibility for Formal Training Allowance with the view to increase its duration for non-English speaking background migrants with language difficulties;
- That a program of support in language and literacy and other special student assistance be provided for target group students enrolled in VET and in structured entry-level training;
- That DEET require public and private tenderers for labour market programs to give consideration to the provision of languages, literacy and other special student support in their submission documents;
- That VET be packaged and presented to target groups in a way that would facilitate their identification with the program by measures including: incorporating relevant images in all promotional materials that would appeal to the target groups and simplifying the information presenting a clearer pathway for study and career/employment;
- That student entry and selection guidelines be in line with access and equity principles; and
- That VET systems review student entry and selection criteria to ascertain the appropriateness and validity of the English language/literacy level specified or assumed.

Participation

- That a target be set to bring the participation level of the target communities in fields of training where employment outcomes are favourable, to a level comparable to that of the general population;
- That a culturally appropriate information campaign be mounted as a matter of priority to encourage participation of women from the target communities in the VET areas not traditionally sought by women; and
- That incentives such as subsidies be provided particularly to small businesses to encourage them to employ young men and women from the target communities as apprentices or trainees, using as a model the ABC and SBS Aboriginal Peoples, Torres Strait Islanders and non-English speaking background trainee schemes.

Delivery of VET

- That cross-cultural awareness training be initiated for providers of VET and that qualified members of the target communities be involved in the delivery of such training;

- That the principles of flexible delivery and open learning be further deployed in the development and delivery of courses to members of the target communities; and
- That VET systems set a target for employment of educational support staff from the target communities to improve the quality of services and relations with those communities.

Outcomes of VET

- That clearer pathways be provided from VET to employment in growth industries and occupations;
- That the White Paper on employment address issues raised in this report as they pertain to the target groups;
- That the VET system market to business and employers the advantages of hiring graduates from VET in the same way that universities do through Graduate Employment Centres; and
- That incentives be provided to business and key industries to employ members of the target communities for structured entry-level training.

Other Related Issues

- That a nationally uniform definition of non-English speaking background be adopted for the purpose of collecting VET related data;
- That the method of collecting VET data on the target groups be standardised;
- That data pertaining to the structured entry level form of VET and VET sponsored by DEET labour market programs etc. be added, from 1995, to the NATMISS database system;
- That the variety of age definition of the youth category be reviewed for the purpose of national data collection; and
- That data on the participation in VET for the target communities be made available annually for analysis, disaggregated by ethnicity, age groups and gender, throughout the VET system, not just in TAFE.

In general recommendations are centred on improving the performance of mainstream aspects of VET to ensure better access, participation and outcomes for non-English speaking background students. However, the report makes a number of recommendations which call for the development of specific non-English speaking background policies and programs, particularly in areas such as information provision, VET delivery, support services and subsidies and incentives.

Non-English Speaking Background Immigrant Women and Training

Publication Details

Vanden Heuvel, A. & Wooden, 1995, M. National Institute of Labour Studies Monograph Series No. 1, Flinders University, for the Research Council of ANTA, *Non-English Speaking Background Immigrant Women and Training*, Adelaide.

Synopsis

This report relies largely on quantitative research, making use of data collected as part of the 1993 ABS Survey of Training and Education to examine participation by immigrant women from non-English speaking backgrounds in various types of work-related training. It focuses on: participation levels; determining what factors relate to the probability of women participating in training; examining whether differences exist in the nature of training received by different groups of women; and comparing non-English speaking background immigrant, English speaking background immigrant and Australian born women's perceptions of the adequacy of the training received and the types of barriers confronted, which inhibit participation in training.

The study is concerned with structured in-house training; unstructured on the job training, structured external training and educational study with vocational objectives in mind (with reference to whether the last two types are employer supported or not).

The report finds that, despite the range of training reforms which have come into force in the 1990s, non-English speaking background immigrant women are in a disadvantaged position in terms of participation in training.

Does the report have an implementation/program or research/policy focus?

The report has a research focus.

Key concerns of the report

- A clear disadvantage exists for non-English speaking background immigrant women in terms of participation in work-related training. Only with respect to employer-supported educational study was involvement by non-English speaking background immigrant women not substantially less than that of Australian born and English speaking background immigrant women;
- With respect to participation in informal on the job training, English-language difficulties of the non-English speaking background immigrants were closely associated with a reduced probability of training, while non-English speaking background immigrants without language difficulties were not any less likely than English speaking background women to undertake unstructured on the job training. However, for all other training types considered, English proficiency was not significant. This finding suggests that English language skills and communication are especially important with regards to the delivery of unstructured training;
- Better educated persons were found to have a much higher probability of receiving training, unless they completed their education overseas, in which case they were not any more likely than persons without post-school qualifications to have participated in training;
- Among those who had participated in structured training, non-English speaking background immigrant women differed little from the other women in the amount of time spent in these courses. Fields of training tended to be the same and there were very few differences across birthplace groups in the motivation for participation in training;
- Non-English speaking background immigrant women were no less likely than other women to respond that their training was adequate, that it helped them to gain a promotion and that the skills they gained were transferable to other employers;
  Non-English speaking background immigrant women were much more likely than other groups of women to respond that their lack of need for training explained their non-participation in training courses, and far less likely to respond that it was the result of the non-availability of suitable courses; and
- English language difficulties were not consistently related to lower levels of participation in training. While non-English speaking background immigrant women were significantly more likely to respond that English language problems prevented participation in training courses, the numbers involved are relatively small.

While not highlighted in the Executive Summary in the report, the authors point out that:

- Non-English speaking background immigrant women were much more likely than the other women in the study to have characteristics that are associated with a lower probability of training, such as: employment in jobs as labourers and plant machine operators; the likelihood of being employed in the manufacturing industry and less likely to be employed in community services; compared to Australian-born women, being older and more likely to have gained education overseas. In only one case, non-English speaking background immigrant women were more likely to hold a characteristic that was associated with a higher probability of training; they were more likely than other women to be employed full-time and permanently.

The authors hypothesise three possible reasons for non-English speaking background immigrant women's lower levels of participation namely:

- Employer discrimination;
- English-language difficulties; and
- Differences in attitudes among the women regarding participation in training.

They find the third reason the most compelling and argue that further exploration of these differences in perception of the value of training is needed.

Key findings/recommendations

There are no formal recommendations, but the authors argue the need for further research into the issue of immigrant women and workplace training, in particular: the relationship between English language skills and participation in training; towards gaining a fuller understanding of why non-English speaking background immigrant women are less likely to consider themselves in need of training; and, further verification of the report findings that the training courses attended by non-English speaking background immigrant women had no less of a beneficial impact on them than other women.

REPORT SUMMARIES

PEOPLE IN RURAL AND REMOTE AREAS

'Development of Strategies to Meet the Skill Needs of Women in Rural and Regionally Isolated Queensland' - DRAFT ONLY

Publication Details

Davis, P. 'Development of Strategies to Meet the Skill Needs of Women in Rural and Regionally Isolated Queensland' - DRAFT ONLY, Report not yet published (draft material made available by author).

Synopsis

The project aims to identify the needs of two of the target groups: women and rural and isolated people. This project, based on work that is done in Queensland provides a model and strategies that could be replicated by other States/Territories.

Does the report have an implementation/program or research policy focus?

The report has a research and implementation focus.

Key concerns of the report

Issues pertaining to the skill and delivery needs of rural and regionally isolated women are most pronounced in Queensland, owing to its geographical size. Only one third of the State's population is found beyond the south eastern statistical divisions of Brisbane and Moreton. Distance and a comparatively uneven population distribution in Queensland exacerbate the problems facing clients and providers of vocational education and training.

Key findings/recommendations

Note: The recommendations below are the first draft recommendations only.

The four categories of recommendations address concerns that relate to information, support, consultation and flexibility.

Information Issues

- Lack of information on access training;
- Lack of promotion on benefits of training for women;
- Lack of availability of advice from institutions;
- Infrequent advertising of courses on offer; and
- Lack of awareness of support structures for women within TAFE.

Recommendations

- That training providers promote a learning culture for rural women through raising awareness of the benefits of training;
- That training providers provide rural women with relevant course information and admission procedures;
- That training providers target women for participation in vocational education and training in their advertising; and
- That information on available support services be part of advertising and promotional material.

Support Issues

- Rural women consistently lack confidence in their ability;
- Despite evidence to the contrary about rural women's multi talented abilities, they are dismissive of their skills; and
- Support structures for rural women are minimal in comparison with those in urban areas.

Recommendations

- That programs promoting women's self esteem be implemented; and
- That equitable and flexible responses to support services for rural and remote women be implemented.

Consultation Issues

- Many rural women feel it's time to move from researching their problems to implementing some definite plans/programs. They have expressed a strong desire to participate in the future in identifying training requirements of women in their communities, in designing course content in consultation with curriculum advisers, and in monitoring outcomes.

Recommendations

- That rural women be consulted in the design and delivery of courses; and
- That a specific focus by training providers be placed on rural women of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent and women from non English speaking backgrounds, in relation to their skills and delivery needs.

Flexibility Issues

- A high proportion of women are two or more hours from the nearest training provider. Rural women desire more flexibility of training by provision of more face to face training; choice and integration of a variety of training methods; access to multi media packages; access to tele and video conferencing.

Recommendations

- That training providers investigate options for the delivery of more flexible training to rural and remote areas; and
- That training in flexible mode is provided for rural women and the extent to which this is occurring be monitored.

athways to Participation: the Vocational and Further Education Needs of Adult migrants in Rural Australia

Publication Details

Mageean, P. 1990, *Pathways to Participation: the Vocational and Further Education Needs of Adult Immigrants in Rural Australia,* TAFE National Centre for Research and Development, Adelaide.

Synopsis

This project, funded by the Bureau of Immigration Research examines the vocational and further educational needs of adult rural-based immigrants, with particular attention to the special needs of women and to the situation in South Australia. The policy implications of these findings are considered and the report makes practical recommendations which will enable educational providers, especially TAFE, to better meet the needs of this group.

Does the report have an implementation/program or research policy focus?

The report has both a policy and implementation/program focus.

Key concerns of the report

Rural based immigrants' access to TAFE addressing:

- Rural based immigrants' participation rates in TAFE;
- Barriers that rural based immigrants face in education and training; and
- Skill development for rural based immigrants which results in employment.

Key findings/recommendations

The key recommendations are:

- Revision of existing TAFE services to evaluate how well they're meeting the needs of rural based immigrants;
- Staff development for teachers dealing with rural based immigrants including those involved in policy development, curricula development and course delivery.
- This development should be made available in a distance education mode;
- Consultation with relevant stakeholders to take place at all stages of development;
- Culturally appropriate child care to be made available; and
- Toll free advisory /interpreter services to be made available to rural based immigrants.

Further findings noted that all immigrants have two things in common (even if they come from English speaking countries e.g. New Zealand):

- Unfamiliarity with the Australian education system. Even though there is a system in Australia for recognising overseas qualifications, the distance factor, the process itself is often overwhelmingly difficult for rural based immigrants. Also, the more dissimilar the education system rural based immigrants came from, the greater the difficulties faced. This is further exacerbated when combined with low levels in English;
- In areas where the physical presence of tertiary education is minimal rural based immigrants share the problems which restrict all rural peoples' access to TAFE;
  - Distance, and the additional costs which this creates;
  - Inadequate information about TAFE and its programs, which is rarely provided in ethnic languages;
  - Inappropriate programs and resources - ESL tuition may be provided, but rarely in small communities are there trained ESL teachers, classes or books to assist those who have progressed beyond ESL level;
  - There are few vocational courses designed to meet the special needs of immigrants available outside the larger cities except through distance education.

Cultivating the Human Factor: Employment and Skills in Australia's Rural Industries

Publication Details

Employment and Skills Formation Council, 1994, *Cultivating the Human Factor: Employment and Skills in Australia's Rural Industries,* NBEET, Canberra.

Synopsis

This report is part of a wider study, completed by the ESFC, on employment and skills in Australian small business, *The Shape of Things to Come*. The report identifies that in order for Australia's rural industries to survive and be competitive in the global market place, changes will need to take place in the way rural workers are educated and trained. The past reliance on developing competencies on the job alone will no longer be sufficient. Middle level management and technical skills will be required by greater proportions of the rural workforce, and these will be increasingly achieved by formal qualifications.

Delivery of these qualifications will be through on and off the job and open learning modes. In this report management skills, and skills in the application and utilisation of information technology, have been identified as top priorities.

Does the report have an implementation/program or research/policy focus?

The report has an implementation/program focus.

Key concerns of the report

The report is concerned with:

- The low level post school qualifications of workers in rural areas;
- The low use of technology in farm management, and low skills of rural industry workers in relation to computer technology; and
- The level of development at entry and middle level competencies for rural industry workers.

Key findings/recommendations

These are summarised as:

- Linkage of the skills formation objectives of DEET with the enterprise improvement programs of DPIE and Austrade in relation to Australia's rural industries;
- Ensuring the costs of RPL in Australia's rural industries are comparable with those in metropolitan areas, and the development and implementation of new models and innovative approaches to assessment of RPL;
- Ensure that providers of farm management courses include coverage of information technology and environmental conservation;
- Explore providing very low-cost pre-used computers from the corporate and public sectors to enterprises in the rural industries, accompanied by appropriate software and training developed by the Commonwealth;
- Develop and adopt appropriate support structure, along the Netherlands model, to facilitate software development;
- Make funds available for rural industries training needs;
- Additional incentives for Group Training Schemes which recruit trainees for rural industries;
- Increased use of consulting/training services and the creation of networks with strong training components; and
- Development of industry training plans with multi-media components.

Furthermore, enterprises in rural industries are typically run by spouse partnerships, who can't rely on the external labour markets to supply their knowledge and skills needed.

Consequently, they will require opportunities to improve their competencies if they are to survive and prosper in increasingly competitive markets, and, if they are to develop a necessary capacity continuously upgrade processes and products.

The Council believes that the major priorities for skill development are:

- The need to develop quality management; and
- The need to emphasise the twin aspects of information technology: its utilisation as an important tool for all elements of management and its utilisation as a tool for learning.

A significant improvement in the general education and training opportunities in Australia's rural communities is also identified as important. RPL is a critical factor, but poses problems for rural industries.

Provision of Post-Compulsory Education and Training in Non-metropolitan Australia

Publication Details

Aeuckens A. 1994, *Provision of Post-Compulsory Education and Training in Non-metropolitan Australia*, NBEET, Canberra.

Synopsis

The main purpose of this paper is to explore ways in which data, derived from a range of statistical criteria or indicators, can assist the process of resource allocation in order to meet the post-compulsory education and training needs of non metropolitan Australia.

Does the report have an implementation/program or research/policy focus?

The report has an implementation and research focus.

Key concerns of the report

There is great difficulty in developing a definitive model of factors. However, the report found it was possible to produce a useful set of indicators. Taken together these indicators can help identify gaps in the current provision of education and training in regional Australia.

Key findings/recommendations

- The National Board supports the development of a process for allocating education and training resources in non-metropolitan Australia which recognises the special needs of those communities, and their industries, and makes appropriate provision for them; and

- The Board supports a regional approach as the best way of meeting the post-compulsory education and training requirements of non-metropolitan Australia.

The findings directly related to VET in Australia are:

- Generally the more remote a region or population settlement, the less likely the people will have access to education and training resources;
- Lower levels of participation in higher education in non-metropolitan areas on the surface indicate that a significant degree of educational inequality exists between metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas; and
- That a lack of suitable local higher education opportunities in non-metropolitan areas is a major casual factor of youth net 'outmigration' from those areas.

Evidence from the case study results for TAFE participation suggest that students in non-metropolitan Australia are:

- Less able to participate in TAFE than students in the state at large;
- Likely to have completed less secondary education;

- Less likely to have had experience of higher education;
- Less likely to be taking 'middle level' courses; and
- More likely to be studying in external mode.

Note: In relation to VET/Higher Education this report supports recommendations in this area in other Board reports such as *Toward National Education and Training: Strategy for Rural Australia* (1991); and *Post-Compulsory Education and Training: Fitting the Need* (1992).

Developing Australia: A Regional Perspective

Publication Details

Taskforce on Regional Development, *Developing Australia: A Regional Perspective,* Volumes 1, 2, and Supplementary Report, Canberra.

Synopsis

The volumes of this report set out Taskforce observations and recommendations aimed at helping regional Australia develop its full potential.

Does the report have an implementation/program or research/policy focus?

Both, but probably more weighted to an implementation focus.

Key concerns of the report

The Taskforce found that there were inequalities in Australian society partially as a result of the changes in the Australian economy over the last decade. Many Australians have been hurt as changes have been made, and the pain has not been felt equally by all. The report found that the unemployed have suffered the greatest pain, and that unemployment differs significantly from region to region.

Key findings/recommendations

Recommendations relevant to VET are summarised below:

- The AVCTS should be implemented as soon as possible, traineeship places expanded and targeted at 15-25 year olds in the regions. Training should include basic general education, vocational education and employment;
- Traineeship programs should be further developed on an industry basis with programs controlled by employers, unions and workers in the industry rather than the educational institutions and some labour market programs could be adjusted in part and incorporated into traineeships;
- A large number of vocational education centres should be established in the regions, using existing education facilities, and new facilities where needed. Priority should be given to establishment in areas with high unemployment; and

- Vocational education centres should be financed through suspending the 1.5% Training Guarantee Levy, increasing the company tax rate by 1% and allowing companies which take on trainees to deduct all unsubsidised costs for such employees from the one per cent in addition to the normal wage deductions allowable before tax costs.

Towards a National Education and Training Strategy for Rural Australia

Publication Details

NBEET, *Towards a National Education and Training Strategy for Rural Australia*, AGPS, Canberra.

Synopsis

This report proposes the development of a national education and training strategy for rural Australians and suggests the key elements of such a strategy.

Does the report have an implementation/program or research/policy focus?

The report has a an implementation focus.

Key concerns of the report

Although there has been considerable effort and expenditure on the part of the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments, industry and rural communities themselves, the provision of post-compulsory education and training for non-metropolitan Australians remains uneven and inadequate.

Key findings/recommendations

The report recommends three key elements of a National Education and Training Strategy for Rural Australians:

National Participation Objectives

- Participation in the equivalent of 12 years structured education/training/pre vocational training by 1995;
- Higher education and TAFE participation levels by young non-metropolitan adults comparable with metropolitan counterparts by 1995; and
- Non-metropolitan participation in skills training and re-skilling to appropriate levels over the next decade.

Major Policy Principles

- Equitable access to education and training for non-metropolitan at a personal cost comparable to that metropolitan people;
- Quality assurance in program development, provision and delivery for non-metropolitan people;

- Coordinated cross-sectoral provision is the most appropriate organisational structure for education and training in non-metropolitan areas;
- Greater flexibility in resourcing and delivery of programs in non-metropolitan areas is needed;
- Effective regional consultative mechanisms are needed to maximise resource usage and coordinate planning; and
- Client input into program planning and development is essential.

Priorities for Cooperative Commonwealth/State Action

- Locally accessible provision of post-compulsory education and training;
- A focus on the most poorly serviced rural and remote regions/communities;
- Young non-metropolitan adults, particularly the 15-29 age group; and
- Skills training for mature adults (30+), particularly in the farm sector.

The report recommendations support key strategy elements which focus on major gaps in participation of non-metropolitan people in post-compulsory education and training:

- Participation by non-metropolitan young people in senior secondary schooling, particularly those in remote areas;
- Participation by the 15-29 age group in higher education and TAFE apprentice and trainee training; and
- Participation by the adult non-metropolitan workforce in skills training and re-skilling, in both award and industry-based training programs across a range of enterprises.

The major factors explaining this situation are identified as:

- Most significantly, lack of access, without major dislocation and/or significant personal costs, to the broad range of formal and informal education and training options available in metropolitan areas; and
- Perceived poorer quality of service in non-metropolitan regions and inappropriate provision.

The report also suggests the following as contributing to the crisis in participation:

- There are proportionally higher concentrations of demographic groupings in non-metropolitan Australia, which are under-represented generally in education and training e.g. Aboriginal people, early school leavers, persons with no post-school qualifications and low income earners; and
- Limited employment opportunities in many rural areas.

There was a high degree of consensus among participants in the study that the central issues of rural participation in, and access to, education and training require a coordinated national response, but the mechanism for such coordination is lacking.

Resourceful Communities: Integrating Education, Training and Work for Young People in Rural Australia

Publication details

Cumming, J. The Australian Curriculum Studies Association, 1992, *Resourceful Communities: Integrating Education, Training and Work for Young People in Rural Australia*, ACSA? Canberra?

Synopsis

This report is the result of a twelve month project funded under a national Innovative Rural Education and Training Program. The report is about community-based partnerships between education, business, government, non-government and interest groups in rural Australia. A major focus of the report is a celebration of best practice in the productive connections that have been made between the worlds of education, training, work and adult life in non-metropolitan areas.

The book was written to support those in rural Australia who are well down the track in establishing community-based partnerships and encourage those who would like to head in the same direction in their localities.

Does the report have an implementation/program or research/policy focus?

The report has an implementation research focus.

Key concerns of the report

The report identifies significant positive impacts from the implementation of community partnerships and cooperative projects in non-metropolitan areas.

Key findings/recommendations

The report does not list specific recommendations, but contains comprehensive strategies and suggestions for making a success of community partnerships and cooperative projects.

It argues that there are four critical factors necessary for success:

- Practical support from participating groups;
- Highly skilled and motivated project coordinators;
- Direct and visible incorporation of innovative projects with mainstream activities; and
- Good public relations and high public profiles for projects.

The Reference Group to the project found that:

- A more effective integration of education, training and work is required in the 1990s;
- Employment-related competencies constitute a sub-set of a broad and general education for all young people;

- A more even distribution of resources is required to support the development of general education, training and work (i.e. over-concentration on one at the expense of another is to be avoided);
- Community-based partnerships and cooperative projects constitute a constructive and practical strategy for integrating education, training and work; and

Local ownership, commitment and practical support for cooperative projects are essential ingredients for generating effective learning outcomes for young people.

REPORT SUMMARIES

GENERAL EQUITY

Guide to the Training Priorities of National Industry Training Advisory Bodies

Publication Details

ANTA,1995, *Guide to the Training Priorities of National Industry Training Advisory Bodies*, ANTA, Brisbane.

Synopsis

The document is intended to provide National Industry Training Advisory Bodies with a template and guidelines for developing National Industry VET Plans.

Does the report have a research/policy focus or an implementation/program focus?

The report has an implementation focus.

Key concerns of the report

- Upgrading skills at both entry-level and of the existing workforce by addressing common areas of skill shortages;
- Increasing the quality of training provision, especially at entry-level;
- Increasing access to training;
- Up-grading skills of small business employers and employees; and
- Increasing participation of target groups.

Key findings/recommendations

- Enhanced quality (measures for ensuring best practice and quality assurance arrangements are in place);
- Improved accessibility;
- Access to training to be fairly distributed between existing workers and new entrants;
- The AVTS to be simplified and based on industry standards;
- Continuous learning (40% of the workforce to have VET qualifications to at least ASF 2 by the year 2001);
- Reducing the 'qualifications gap' of existing workers;
- Attention to lower skilled workers in training plans, and studies aimed at improving the qualifications of workers (especially at operative level) in those identified industries;
- Progress against targets for young people in VET;
- Upgrading skills of middle-level (ASF4-6) workers;
- Targeted groups whose needs in VET have not been incorporated or identified, and strategies developed to account for the special needs of these groups in providing training;
- Increased vocational education in schools, and more entry-level training places;

- Group Training Schemes as 'brokers' between training providers and individuals, making it easier for everyone (especially under-represented groups) to access training;
- Improving pathways between school and work, and between programs;
- More accessible marketing of programs (e.g. format and language);
- Funding allocation partly on ability to meet the needs of people in target groups;
- VET programs to incorporate language, literacy and numeracy competencies (including English language);
- Curriculum to cater for diversity;
- Representative organisations to be consulted regarding training needs during planning processes;
- Agreement of targets between State/Territory training authorities and client representative bodies;
- Support service to account for special needs;
- Needs of target groups recognised in design and delivery; and
- National student services initiative to assist under-represented groups to access VET.

There were also specific recommendations for each of the identified target groups.

Good Ideas in Industry VET Plans

Publication Details

ANTA, 1995, *Good Ideas in Industry VET Plans*, ANTA, Brisbane.

Synopsis

The document is a companion to *Guide to the Training Priorities of National Industry Training Advisory Bodies.*

Does the report have a research/policy focus or an implementation/program focus?

The focus is on program/implementation.

Key concerns of the report

Case-studies are used as examples of best practice for ITABs with the key concerns being:

- Consultation strategies and processes for developing national industry VET Plans;
- Analysis of statistical information;
- Key skill and knowledge areas;
- Current and potential skill shortages;
- Strategies to address target areas;
- Implementation of competency standards; and
- Improving the delivery of VET.

Key findings/recommendations

Good ideas (best practice) in relation to access and equity identified by the report include:

- Identification of barriers;
- Specific strategies to overcome these; and
- Identification of areas where more research is needed.

Case-studies were used to illustrate best practice examples of following these practices in regard to equity.

1. Negotiated Targets Strategies in Victorian TAFE Colleges

2 Negotiated Targets Strategy - Guidelines, 1995

Publication Details

Office of Technical and Further Education, 1993, *Negotiated Targets Strategies in Victorian TAFE Colleges,* Office of Technical and Further Education, Melbourne, and *Negotiated Targets Strategy - Guidelines, 1995,* Office of Technical and Further Education, Melbourne.

Synopsis

The report is a summary of actions and planned actions which relate to Victorian TAFE colleges to encourage, support and increase the enrolment and completion rates of students from target groups in accredited vocational programs. Under the Negotiated Targets Strategy (NTS), colleges tag a number of places in courses for students from under-represented groups who would not normally gain a place under the standard selection criteria or procedures. The report outlines examples of best practice strategies for achieving these targets.

Does the report have a research/policy focus or an implementation/program focus?

The report has an implementation/program focus.

Key concerns of the report

The major focus of the report was on mainstreaming access and equity issues

Key findings/recommendations

Recommendations detailing general strategies shown to be effective in meeting NTS targets included:

- Provision of on-campus childcare;
- Dissemination of information on articulation pathways, courses and employment options;
- Introduction of teaching strategies to support individual students in their learning;
- Provision of concurrent support (e.g. parallel tutorials) and individual teaching (e.g. literacy and numeracy); and
- Provision of counselling and other support to assist students achieve satisfactory outcomes.

Other strategies included:

- Establishment of effective databases to maintain accurate information on enrolment patterns, levels of participation by target groups, areas of teachers' specialised training and expertise); and incorporation of this data into effective management information systems and analysis and reporting mechanisms;
- Development of long-term strategic planning processes (e.g. identification of local barriers to participation; establishment of target systems; inclusion of NTS in departmental planning; piloting of RPL processes to evaluate the benefits to NTS students);
- Establishment and evaluation of performance monitoring strategies and reporting mechanisms;
- Funding strategies;
- Information, awareness and access strategies, e.g. review of selection procedures to courses; staff and wider community information activities, (including advertising, media releases, brochures, incentives for NTS students, community/school information sessions, guidelines for support of NTS students);
- Program delivery strategies (e.g. flexibility/alternatives or open modes of delivery, assessment methodologies, off-campus course options);
- Strategies for improving articulation into and between accredited vocational courses;
- Support services strategies (e.g. counselling, concession policy, study skills support, development of staff specialist expertise, and, concurrent courses/tutorials); and
- Staff development and support strategies.

In the context of the NTS. All of the case-study actions taken were implemented and planned activities will be monitored and evaluated as part of college commitments to the NTS.

Organising a Fair Go: Fair Participation in Vocational Education and Training and the Victorian Negotiated Targets Strategy

Publication Details

Lundberg, D. & Cleary, M. 1995, *Organising a Fair Go: Fair Participation in Vocational Education and Training and the Victorian Negotiated Targets Strategy*, NCVER, Adelaide.

Synopsis

This paper evaluates the Victorian Negotiated Targets Strategy and the merits of national application of the principles of the strategy.

Does the report have a research/policy focus or an implementation/program focus?

The overall focus is research/policy.

Using case studies of implementation in 6 colleges as a basis the findings the key concerns were:

- The general pattern for the implementation of the NTS was of modest success 1990-91; a very high increase in places for target groups in 1992, and a shortfall in 1993 after stricter guidelines were introduced. The pattern for isolated rural people, people with disabilities, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples was less positive than for other groups;
- One concern identified was considerable variation between colleges in accurate and consistent definition of membership of target groups (despite the revised guidelines in 1993). Shortcomings of the quantitative reporting requirements of NTS are a recurrent theme of the case-studies; with quantitative measures seen as over-valued, to the neglect of qualitative issues; and
- The NTS had won widespread support for the principles of the strategy, despite the differences about detail, and was considered to have increased awareness about fair participation issues. Removal of NTS was seen as likely to lead to a deterioration in equitable access and participation.

The main criticisms of NTS were:

- Reporting of data (noted above);
- Limitation to full-time enrolments;
- The difficulty achieving NTS places in courses in high demand;
- The variety of practices in spending NTS funds; and
- Views for and against linking NTS participation reporting to course completion data, and explicitly relating individuals to NTS places.

The report concludes that the NTS operated quite successfully as a cost-effective means of increasing access for disadvantaged clients.

Key findings/recommendations

The report suggests that a 'fair participation strategy', based on the principles of the NTS could be instituted by ANTA Ministerial Council. This would consolidate arrangements already initiated by ANTA, and effectively build upon AVETMISS/NATMISS arrangements (management information system of nationally consistent data standards, population definitions and data collection procedures) already in place.

Separate Responsibilities: a Comparative Equity-Focused Study of Commercial and Community Training Providers

Publication Details

Barnett, K. & Wilson, S. NCVER, 1995, *Separate Responsibilities: A Comparative Equity-Focused Study of Commercial and Community Training Providers*, AGPS, Canberra.

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Synopsis

The study was funded by the Women's Research and Employment Initiatives Program (WREIP) in 1993. It is based on a survey of two groups of training providers, community based (non-profit) providers and commercial (for profit) providers. It explores the extent to which private sector training organisations regard access and equity issues as central or peripheral to their operations and analyses the accessibility of private vocational education to women. This study fills a number of gaps in the current literature relating to barriers faced by women in training. The report points to future strategies which would foster gender equity in training and raises pertinent questions for the national training policy makers.

Does the report have a research/policy focus or an implementation/program focus?

The report has a research/policy focus.

Key concerns of the report/findings

- The promotion of a more open and competitive training market is intended to improve efficiency; but does raise concerns about access and equity. Particularly, the possibility of equity being treated as an unwanted cost, rather than a desirable outcome;
- The study had an especial focus on women in vocational education and training;
- Research found a clear understanding of, and commitment to, the concept and principles of equity on the part of most community providers, but not on the part of most commercial providers. Most private sector providers believe access and equity is a priority issue, but see this as the responsibility of the public sector, or of the individual student (i.e. enrolment). This was in contrast to most of the community providers;
- The payment of tuition fees to private providers excludes groups with low disposable income, thus access is a key equity issue; and
- Researchers identified a lack of objective information which students could access to evaluate the quality of individual providers, or make informed choices between providers.

Key findings/recommendations

- Development of policy to ensure that equity does not become the exclusive responsibility of public sector training providers as this would lead to a reduction in the competitive capacity of public sector providers, and actually work against the outcomes being sought within training reform; and
- Policy needs to be accompanied by resources, support, educative processes (such as those which have assisted the public sector to date), and access to appropriate expertise. For such a policy to be effective, private providers must not feel that it has been imposed on them by governments, or that they are without assistance to meet the outcomes as prescribed by policy.

The study identified that further research needs to be done to determine whether (as had been suggested by some private providers) equity issues are addressed by commercial providers by a combination of selective access and individualised training provision.

Achievement for Everyone: A Strategy for Equity in Education and Training in NSW

Publication Details

NSW Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs & NSW Department for Industrial Relations and Employment, 1994, *Achievement for Everyone: A Strategy for Equity in Education and Training in NSW*, NSW Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs & NSW Department for Industrial Relations and Employment, Sydney.

Synopsis

The report focuses on increasing access, quality of participation and success for all learners, maximising what they know and understand and what they are able to do.

Does the report have a research/policy focus or an implementation/program focus?

The report has a policy focus.

Key concerns of the report

- To increase the access, quality of participation and success of all learners, to maximise what they know and understand, and what they are able to do; and
- The strategy makes a commitment to developing and monitoring a comprehensive agenda for equity, across all education and training in NSW.

Key findings/recommendations

The key areas of action are identified as:

- Dismantling barriers (e.g. poverty, isolation, discrimination, institutional barriers);
- Successful participation (creating the conditions, highest quality curriculum, language and literacy development, etc.); and
- Successful continuation and provision for lifelong learning (ensuring clear, flexible and integrated pathways, credit transfer procedures, establishing and maintaining safety nets, etc.).

The Strategy proposes three stages:

- Stage 1 - A broad policy framework (the Strategy) establishing a set of principles;
- Stage 2 - Development of specific plans of action, by all government agencies providing or supporting education and training (including specific strategies, targets and performance outcomes); and
- Stage 3 - Review, reporting, and accountability processes; evaluation of the complete Strategy.

There is a particular focus on not treating access and equity as separate activities, but ensuring they are integrated with, and integral to, the entire approach to education and training. 'Action for equity has tended to focus on those defined groups of learners (disadvantaged) and too often, their apparent or assumed deficiencies … this Strategy, however, takes on a broader view … equity must become a central concern and reference point for all those involved in education and training.'

Proposed Social Justice Policy for the Vocational Education, Training and Employment System: Discussion Paper

Publication Details

Queensland Vocational Education, Training and Employment Commission, 1993, *Proposed Social Justice Policy for the Vocational Education, Training and Employment System: Discussion Paper*, Queensland Vocational Education, Training and Employment Commission, Brisbane.

Synopsis

The stated rationale for developing a social justice strategy for the VETE system encompasses economic, social and legislative arguments. VETEC recognises that certain groups within society are confronted with barriers which limit or deny access to, and participation in, VET and employment programs. As a result these groups experience differential outcomes from the VET and employment system. To address these issues and barriers, VETEC has sought to develop a social justice policy.

Does the report have a research/policy focus or an implementation/program focus?

The report has a policy focus.

Key concerns of the report

The key objectives for the proposed policy are:

- To promote equitable access for all present and potential students and clients of vocational education, training and employment services and programs in Queensland;
- To increase the participation of disadvantaged groups in VET and employment services and programs, including participation in decision making processes;
- To encourage successful outcomes for students and clients of the vocational education, training and employment system; and
- To encourage the further development and extension of support services for clients and students in the vocational education, training and employment system.

Key findings/recommendations

- The document describes the current situation of identified disadvantaged groups, outlines the issues/barriers facing each group, and recommends options and strategies to be pursued (usually relating to implementation of recommendations contained in other reports), as well as across broader areas such as recommending a target scheme;
- It identifies a range of central issues to achieving the overall aim of 'maximising access, participation and outcomes in the vocational education, training and employment system for all 'Queenslanders';
- Coordination and consistency (with existing State and Federal policies, legislation, etc.); and
- Implementation covering resource implications the accepting of responsibility by all VET providers; allocation of funding and reporting mechanisms, accreditation and recognition processes, articulation of Federal government information management programs.

The basic principles of the proposed policy lie in the mainstreaming of access and equity into the entire the vocational education, training and employment system.

Australian Vocational Certificate Training System: Equity Strategy

Publication Details.

Queensland Vocational Education, Training and Employment Commission, 1993, *Australian Vocational Certificate Training System: Equity Strategy*, endorsed by the Queensland Vocational Education, Training and Employment Commission, DEET, Canberra.

Synopsis

Does the report have a research/policy focus or an implementation/program focus?

The report has a policy focus.

Key concerns of the report

The key concern of the document is to ensure that equity issues are taken into account in the development and implementation of the Australian Vocational Training System (then the AVCTS). It asserts that a key stage of development of the AVTS is the piloting of the new arrangements through a number of pilot projects thus ensuring that there is an emphasis on the equity strategy at the pilot stage.

Key findings/recommendations

The report recommends:

- A mainstreaming approach involving attention to equity considerations in pilot selection, conduct, monitoring and evaluation; and

- A pilot focusing on a particular identified group to trial approaches appropriate to the needs of that specific group; the strategy anticipated that such pilot proposals would emerge, but also recommends a 'fast-tracking' process i.e. identification and funding by the Commonwealth for a limited number of pilots of national significance.

The strategy noted that although the current focus was on the pilot projects, the following issues would need to be addressed:

- Industry training plans;
- Curriculum, assessment and teacher/trainer training;
- The definition of career and non-career aspirants; and
- Marketing of the AVTS.

It also noted the Employment and Skills Formation Council *AVCTS Report* recommended a variety of specific peak organisations, working parties, etc. for consultation purposes and further advice on specific target groups. It was noted that the ESFC report did not specifically address the needs of people in rural and remote areas, and the report referred this issue to the Cross-Sectoral Balanced Growth Working Party.

Further research was recommended in areas such as:

- Evaluation of existing employer equity subsidies and programs;
- Documentation of factors which limited the AVTS in terms of widening access for a range of disadvantaged groups of young people;
- Identification of best equity practices in apprenticeships and traineeships;
- Further research on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' transition from school to work and possible barriers to access to the AVTS; and
- Training conditions and standards within feminised industries to study the impact of the AVTS pilots over time.

Training in Transition: Evaluation of the AVTS Pilot Phase 1993 and 1994

Publication Details.

DEET, 1995, *Training in Transition: Evaluation of the AVTS Pilot Phase 1993 and 1994*, DEET, Canberra.

Synopsis

Does the report have a research/policy focus or an implementation/program focus?

The report has a program/research focus.

Key concerns of the report

- Evaluation of the AVTS pilot phase has shown that a comprehensive, industry driven system of training can be implemented in Australia;

- **The AVTS itself acts as a change agent It is part of a broader cultural change seeking to transform the nature of vocational education and training through introduction into the workplace;**
- The pilots produced challenges for VET accreditation authorities and providers (especially secondary schools); and
- The evaluation found broad acceptance of the principles of the AVTS (making training more relevant to the workplace); though many concerns exist about the details of full implementation.

Key findings/recommendations

- Industry involvement needs to be expanded and facilitated; the long-term aim is that the system be wholly industry-led;
- There needs to be a balance between institution-based and work-based approaches;
- Communication between the stakeholders at all levels is crucial;
- The integration of on and off the job training is vital; lack of industry control can lead to lack of relevance to employer needs; and
- On the job assessment has caused confusion, and there is a risk that if consistent standards are not used it may downgrade the credential or threaten its portability.

Specific access and equity recommendations were that the equity objectives of the AVTS had met with varying degrees of success with some difficulties in attracting, selecting and retaining trainees from targeted groups; and that it requires *active* measures, such as:

- Engaging expert assistance;
- Mainstreaming strategies into selection processes;
- A flexible approach to delivery which responds to individual needs;
- Ongoing support systems for retention of trainees;
- The specific needs of equity groups must be recognised and catered for;
- Support for equity group participants must be provided on an on-going basis;
- Those involved in the AVTS need easy access to information about strategies and resources which assist in recruiting, selecting and retaining equity group members;
- Outcomes of equity groups need to be covered in a longitudinal survey of trainees;
- ANTA and State/Territory and Commonwealth agencies need to provide advice and assistance;
- Project proponents should meet minimum standards to receive Commonwealth funding;
- The increased costs and increased numbers of participants raised the possibility of cost shifting to the public sector; the report recommended monitoring of this issue; and
- Marketing of the system was essential to attract participation of enterprises and develop their understanding of the principles of AVTS.

Mainstreaming is a central component of the Equity Strategy. 'In practice, access and equity strategies should be built into the selection process, so that actions which will help improve the participation of equity group members are automatically part of the process rather than existing only on paper'.

The report noted two main barriers to success on the part of larger employers in substantially incorporating access and equity issues as part of the selection process:

- The employer has very little idea of what effective access and equity strategies look like, and is reluctant to learn; and
- The employer has a strategy in place (whether effective or not) and is resistant to change.

These barriers, and the resulting shortfalls in equity targets, are not restricted to the AVTS. 'The perception that introducing a dramatically new training system will make it more difficult to implement change in trainee selection procedures needs to be challenged. The introduction of competency based training can actually be used to advantage in altering employer perceptions of disadvantaged groups (as the trainee's capacity does not depend on bias or stereotypical perceptions of the trainee's 'likely' abilities. In addition, many employers apparently have differing definitions of the term 'merit', and shift from their traditional view of who they should select for training. Expert assistance may be required (e.g. reviewing selection criteria; questioning the evidence required to demonstrate ability or success against each criterion)'.